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Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 33
Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin

Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin

Report of the Secretary-General*

1. The question of restitution of works of art to countries that are victims of appropriation was first considered by the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session, in 1972 (see resolution 3026 A (XXVII)). The Assembly subsequently considered the question at its twenty-eighth, thirtieth to thirty-sixth, thirty-eighth, fortieth, forty-second, forty-fourth, forty-sixth, forty-eighth, fiftieth, fifty-second and fifty-fourth sessions (resolutions 3148 (XXVIII), 3187 (XXVIII), 3391 (XXX), 31/40, 32/18, 33/50, 34/64, 35/127, 35/128, 36/64, 38/34, 40/19, 42/7, 44/18, 46/10, 48/15, 50/56, 52/24 and 54/190). By its resolution 54/190 of 17 December 1999, the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to submit to it, at its fifty-sixth session, a report on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The attached report, transmitted to the Secretary-General by the Director-General of UNESCO, is submitted pursuant to the above request.

* The footnote requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

01-55613 (E) 121001

Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the action taken by the Organization on the return and restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin

1. Since the submission of the previous report by the Director-General (A/54/436, annex), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has continued to promote the return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin. It has, in particular, endeavoured to implement the recommendations adopted by the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation at its tenth session, held in Paris from 25 to 28 January 1999. Those recommendations were based on the progress made since the first session of the Committee, held in 1980. The present report describes the measures taken to follow up the recommendations adopted by the Committee at its tenth session, as well as the work of the Committee at its eleventh session, held at Phnom Penh from 6 to 9 March 2001.

I. Introduction

2. At the invitation of Cambodia, the eleventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation was held at Phnom Penh. Fourteen of the 22 members of the Committee attended the meeting. Fifteen member States which are not members of the Committee also participated, as did two States which are not members of the Organization, four intergovernmental organizations, one non-governmental organization, and the chairman of the working group of legal experts on the settlement of disputes related to cultural property displaced during the Second World War. Numerous observers from Cambodia were present during the four days of the meeting.

II. Opening of the session

3. The Committee was welcomed by the Prime Minister of Cambodia, Hun Sen, who stressed the importance of the cultural heritage of Cambodia and the efforts being made to counter the scourge of illicit trafficking. He was followed by the Chairman of the Cambodia National Commission for UNESCO, Sok An, and the Director of the UNESCO Office in Cambodia, Etienne Clement. The representative of the Director-General of UNESCO, Lyndel Prott, summarized the activities of the Intergovernmental Committee described in the report of the secretariat (CLT-2001/CONF.202/2 and CLT-2001/CONF.202/2 Add.). She noted the appeal made by the Cambodian Government to the Director-General of UNESCO to use his influence to prevent the destruction of the images of Buddha in Afghanistan.

III. Election of the Bureau

4. Solomon Eshete, Head of the Department for the Inspection and Registration of Cultural Heritage of Ethiopia, was elected Chairperson. The representatives of Azerbaijan, China, Greece and Lebanon were elected Vice-Chairpersons. Sybil Campbell, Ambassador of Jamaica, was named Rapporteur.

IV. Adoption of the agenda

5. The provisional agenda proposed by the secretariat was adopted after the addition of a final item, entitled "Other matters".

V. Bilateral negotiations concerning matters of return and restitution

6. The discussions began with the two pending cases before the Committee: the case of the Parthenon marbles (Greece/United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and that of the Boguskoy sphinx (Turkey/Germany). UNESCO had first received the request for the restitution of the Parthenon marbles, which are in the British Museum, in September 1984. In October 1985, the United Kingdom had replied in the negative to the request. At its fifth session, in April 1987, the Committee had been informed of the project to build a new museum in Athens to house the

Parthenon marbles on their return to Greece. At subsequent meetings, held in 1989, 1991, 1994, 1996 and 1999, the Committee had adopted recommendations calling for an amicable settlement of the dispute.

7. Developments since the most recent meeting of the Committee, in January 1999, included the convening of a two-day conference, in December 1999, at the British Museum on the conservation of marble sculptures, attended by both British and Greek experts, as well as the appearance before the House of Commons Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport of the United Kingdom, at its invitation, of the Greek Foreign Minister, Mr. Papandreou. With the agreement of both delegations, a recommendation (No. 1) was adopted to further develop collaboration in the exchange of expert information on the marbles and to invite the Director-General of UNESCO to take new initiatives to promote discussions between the two member States with the intention of holding a first meeting in 2001.

8. With respect to the request of Turkey for the restitution of the Boguskoy sphinx, introduced against the then German Democratic Republic in 1986 and currently addressed to Germany, the expert from Turkey referred to prior bilateral negotiations and the renewed request of Turkey for negotiations, dated 8 September 2000, which had been conveyed to Germany. The Committee took note that both sides had agreed that further bilateral discussions would be held during 2001 (Recommendation No. 2). During the discussions, it was pointed out that the procedure before the Intergovernmental Committee required the completion by Germany of the Standard Form concerning Requests for Return or Restitution, designed to provide the Intergovernmental Committee with all of the necessary information for consideration of requests for return. The secretariat was invited to take the necessary action to remind States of their duty in this respect.

VI. Object-ID: identification of objects to combat the traffic in cultural property

9. The General Conference of UNESCO, at its 30th session held in November 1999, recommended to all member States the use and promotion of Object-ID, following its endorsement by the Committee at its tenth session as the international core documentation standard for recording minimal data on movable cultural property and for identifying cultural objects with a view to combating illicit trafficking in cultural property. Members of the Committee reiterated the fundamental importance of the standard and the need for the dissemination of information on cultural property in order to assist in its recovery. Object-ID is also compatible with other existing databases, as well as with the CRIGEN-ART form used by the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) for the collection of information on stolen cultural property. The Director-General of UNESCO was invited to promote the further dissemination and use of Object-ID, in particular by use of the Internet (Recommendation No. 3).

VII. The launch of an international code of ethics for dealers

10. In accordance with Recommendation No. 3 adopted by the Committee at its tenth session, the International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 30th session as an international voluntary standard for professionals that is promoted by the Organization following the principles established by the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (hereinafter referred to as the 1970 UNESCO Convention). A publication containing the text of the Code and an explanatory brochure have been produced by the secretariat. The Code was officially launched and the publication on the Code presented to the general public at the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the 1970 UNESCO Convention, on 15 November 2000 (see sect. XIII below). Member States of UNESCO are encouraged to provide the secretariat with lists of dealers in their respective countries in order to facilitate the dissemination of the Code, as well as request additional copies of the publication from the secretariat for national promotion of the Code. Other proposals are: the creation of a web site for the publication of the Code of Ethics, inscribed with the UNESCO logo; the establishment of a regularly updated list of dealers that adhere to the Code; and that registrations on this list should be accompanied by adequate endorsement issued by the appropriate national authorities who would ensure that eventual violations of the Code would result in the removal of

the dealer from the list (Recommendation No. 3). The secretariat will give further consideration to the possibility of the Organization establishing such a list and, in particular, its legal aspects and consequences.

VIII. Effective creation of a fund to support member States: appeal of the Director-General

11. The International Fund for the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation was created by the UNESCO General Conference in November 1999, pursuant to Recommendation No. 6 adopted by the Committee at its tenth session, and officially launched on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the 1970 UNESCO Convention. The Fund will be financed by voluntary contributions from States and private partners, and is intended to finance verification by experts of cultural objects in their countries of location, the transportation of such objects, the insurance of artefacts, and the setting up of suitable exhibition facilities and training of museum professionals in the countries of origin. National surveys should be carried out in order to assess the international assistance required for training and strengthening museum structures in order to qualify for international support through the Fund. The appeal of the Director-General for contribution to the International Fund for the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation was presented to the Committee. Recommendation No. 4 calls for an effective promotion strategy concerning the International Fund, while Recommendation No. 3 supports the publication of information regarding voluntary contributions to the Fund. In pursuance of these recommendations, the secretariat is preparing a publicity pack as a means of seeking donations to the Fund.

IX. Effective strategy for the promotion of UNESCO instruments in the fight against illicit traffic in cultural property

12. In order to efficiently use the International Fund, the International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property and the standard Object-ID, which all represent voluntary instruments in the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural property, an effective promotion strategy is required. A strong case was made for the definition and implementation of a strategy for the promotion, in particular, of the Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property by assessing all possible links between, on the one hand, the private sector and, on the other hand, the interests of member States. The creation of a working group of experts in programme design and communications to develop the proposed strategy was suggested. Other possible means include diffusion of information through the media and the Internet, and increased financial and staff support for the secretariat (Recommendation No. 4).

X. Cultural property and the Internet

13. The issue of sales of cultural objects on the Internet was discussed and consideration was given to the serious problem of cultural property being illicitly sold through this means, and the need for States and international organizations to address it, among other means, by the adoption of international legislation in the field. A copy of the law of one member State of the Committee, which prohibits auctioning of cultural objects on the Internet, was circulated for information.

XI. Illicit trafficking: endangered heritage

14. As in the previous two sessions of the Committee, the problem of illicit trafficking in cultural property in Iraq was raised and activities outlined by the secretariat for the safeguarding of its cultural heritage. Although in 1991 the secretariat had been notified of the loss of about 3,000 to 4,000 cultural objects from Iraq, the information provided was not sufficiently detailed to trace the missing objects in the art market. Small objects, such as coins and pins, are difficult to identify and very easy to transport because of their size. In the case of large and identifiable objects (such as the wall panels from the Sennacherib Palace Site Museum at Nineveh, discovered on the market by an archaeologist who had previously photographed them in situ), the holder of the objects can rarely be traced since there is no legal obligation on the person showing photographs of objects on sale to disclose their source. In this regard, the voluntary adoption of the Code of Ethics by dealers in cultural property is intended to counter the problem of secrecy prevailing in the art market and to

close legal loopholes. It was pointed out that the poor economic conditions of the Iraqi population favoured illicit excavations and illicit trafficking in cultural objects. The usefulness of export permits in this context was also discussed. The Director-General was invited to pursue his efforts in favour of the Iraqi cultural heritage and to take all necessary measures to search for cultural and archaeological objects illicitly exported from Iraq and to return them to their country of origin (Recommendation No. 6).

15. Concern was also expressed concerning the protection of the cultural heritage of Pakistan, in particular with regard to the exhibition of illicitly excavated objects from the region of Baluchistan. The Director-General was invited to provide technical and financial support for the protection of archaeological sites in Baluchistan (Recommendation No. 5).

16. Throughout the meeting, the Committee was kept abreast by the secretariat of the threatened destruction of the pre-Islamic statues by the Taliban in Afghanistan and of the efforts being made to save them. Many experts expressed their indignation and concern and supported the Director-General's actions to try to rescue them. The Director-General was invited to examine the possibility of a joint project by Pakistan and UNESCO for surveying potential markets in Pakistan where stolen antiquities could be made available for sale and for making efforts to secure them for return to Afghanistan.

XII. Report of the meeting of experts on the settlement of disputes concerning cultural property displaced during the Second World War

17. The Intergovernmental Committee was briefed by the chairman of the meeting of experts on the settlement of disputes concerning cultural property displaced during the Second World War, held at UNESCO headquarters from 29 to 31 May 2000, and on the progress made in the consideration of principles designed as guidance for States in negotiations on these matters. A second meeting of experts is planned for 2002 to complete the work, in accordance with Recommendation No. 7 adopted by the Intergovernmental Committee at its tenth session.

XIII. Thirtieth anniversary of the 1970 UNESCO Convention

18. On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the 1970 UNESCO Convention, a seminar was organized at UNESCO headquarters on 15 November 2000, which brought together eminent researchers in the field of law and archaeology, the heads of the Italian Art Theft Police and the French Stolen Art Items Central Office, the head of the legal department of the Swiss Federal Office of Culture, the Secretary-General of the International Council of Museums and the coordinator of the project "Object-ID". The programme featured presentations on the current problem of illicit traffic, the legal response given by the 1970 UNESCO Convention and the 1995 International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Property, as well as practical measures to implement the conventions, such as the establishment of inventories and the training of police services. The day closed with an official ceremony in the presence of senior governmental representatives and ambassadors of UNESCO member States, launching several important new publications on the conventions: a brochure on the International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property (available on the UNESCO web site); an information kit featuring postcards of stolen cultural objects and describing the conventions and UNESCO activities in the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural property (also available on the UNESCO web site); an article-by-article commentary on the 1970 UNESCO Convention in English; a handbook for the implementation of the 1970 Convention in French (also available in English, Chinese and Spanish); and a commentary on the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention in French (also available in English). The event was widely reported in the press.

XIV. Notices of stolen cultural property

19. The Intergovernmental Committee noted that the secretariat would cease to issue notices written on paper of stolen cultural property owing to lack of resources and the current availability of electronic means for the dissemination of information. The organizations that should be contacted in the case of theft and illicit export of cultural property for the purpose of the diffusion of information include

Interpol, as well as commercial databases, such as Invaluable/Trace and the Art Loss Register.

XV. Presentations and documentaries on illicit trafficking and the restitution of works of art

20. The Intergovernmental Committee heard presentations concerning the situation of the cultural heritage in various member States of the Committee, namely, Angola, Azerbaijan, China, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lebanon, Pakistan and the Republic of Korea, and the observer States of Canada, Indonesia, Iraq, Rwanda, Thailand and the United States of America also gave information. Items of major interest were: a report on successful bilateral negotiations for the return of cultural property between two observer States; the establishment in 2000 of an Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage in one member State; new legal provisions enacted since 1992 in one observer State; and detailed information given on the location of cultural property of particular significance for a number of States, as well as measures taken to request its return. Presentations were also made by representatives of the Italian Art Theft Police on the Italian computerized information system on stolen cultural property and international police cooperation, the representative of Interpol on its activities to curb illicit trafficking in cultural property, and the representative of UNIDROIT on the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention. The representative of UNESCO reported the return of cultural property to Cambodia.

21. The documentary "Beyond Angkor, Endangered Treasures in Cambodia", produced by Pierre Stine with the collaboration of Claude Jacques (co-production Gédéon Programmes/France2) was screened. A short video illustrated the restitution by Thailand to Cambodia of 117 cultural objects originating from Banteay Chmar and 5 other items also stolen from Cambodia and confiscated in Thailand.

XVI. Date and place of the twelfth session of the Committee

22. An invitation extended by the Ethiopian Minister of Culture to host the twelfth session of the Intergovernmental Committee in 2003 was supported by a number of delegates. The secretariat will explore the possibility of holding the twelfth session of the Committee in Ethiopia, with due regard to the representation of a sufficient number of member States to reach the required quorum.

XVII. Adoption of the recommendations

23. The Committee adopted 10 recommendations included in the report of the meeting which will be circulated. Owing to lack of time, two draft recommendations could not be considered or sufficiently examined to reach a final agreement. These concerned the progress made by the working group of experts on the settlement of disputes concerning cultural property displaced during the Second World War and the invitation addressed to member States to adopt legislation prohibiting the sales of cultural objects on the Internet.

XVIII. Closure of the session

24. The eleventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation was officially closed with a ceremony featuring addresses by the President of the National Assembly of Cambodia, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, the representative of the Director-General, Lyndel Prott, and the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee, Solomon Eshete. At the succeeding press conference, the results of the meeting were presented to the Cambodian press corps.

Annex

Recommendations

Recommendation No. 1

The Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation,

Expressing its continuing concern for the resolution of the issue of the Parthenon Marbles,

Noting the efforts of the Director–General to undertake initiatives in order to contribute to the promotion of negotiations between the two member States,

1. *Takes note* that an international conference was held in London (British Museum, November 1999) concerning the cleaning of the Parthenon sculptures in the British Museum in 1938, in which, among others, experts of the British Museum and of the Greek Ministry of Culture participated and whose results shall be fully published;

2. *Invites* the two member States to continue and further develop their cooperation and collaboration in the exchange of expert information in the areas of research, conservation and museology relating to the Parthenon sculptures;

3. *Takes note* that the recent official positions of the two member States were delineated and published (July 2000) in the report, entitled "Cultural property: return and illicit trade", of the United Kingdom House of Commons Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport;

4. *Invites* the Director-General to undertake new initiatives for the purpose of promoting discussions between the two member States on a pre-specified agenda investigating a closer meeting of minds with the intention of holding a first meeting in 2001;

5. *Further invites* the Director-General to report back to the Committee at its twelfth session on the result of these discussions.

Recommendation No. 2

The Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation,

Recalling the request of Turkey for the sphinx of Boguskoy which is currently on display at the Berlin Museum,

Noting the legal and cultural arguments which have been made by both States concerned over a number of years,

Recalling the previous Recommendations Nos. 2 adopted by the Committee on this question at its sixth and tenth sessions,

Aware of continuing concern of Turkey for the resolution of the issue of the sphinx,

Noting that the 7,400 cuneiform tablets which were part of the original request of 1987 of Turkey to the German Democratic Republic were returned,

Expresses its hope that the pending request of Turkey with regard to the sphinx will be solved through bilateral meetings,

1. *Takes note* of the fact that bilateral contacts have taken place on this matter;

2. *Invites* both parties to continue these meetings with a view to bringing this issue to a mutually acceptable solution;

3. *Invites* the Director-General to continue his good offices to resolve this issue.

Recommendation No. 3

The Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation,

Considering that the country of origin's enhancement of its movable cultural heritage, and its inclusion within the framework of development strategies, represent an important asset for the promotion of inter-cultural dialogue,

Recalling the duties assigned by the Statutes, in particular article 4, in respect of bilateral negotiations and cooperation to facilitate the restitution of cultural property to its countries of origin and prevent illicit trafficking,

Considering that Resolution No. 27 of the UNESCO General Conference commits the Organization to:

(a) Promoting the adoption of the International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property and Object-ID;

(b) Supporting links among various databases related to theft of cultural property and encouraging the States with most experience in those areas to share their expertise with other States;

1. *Invites* the Director-General of UNESCO to examine the possibilities of financing within the budget of UNESCO with a view to:

(a) Promoting the dissemination of Object-ID (accompanied by the UNESCO logo), along with the various additional tools (e.g., multilingual glossaries), and posting this standard on the UNESCO Internet web site;

(b) Collaborating more closely with member States that are more experienced in inventory systems;

(c) Ensuring that the software is compatible with the tools that are currently available and that they can be downloaded at no cost from the web sites;

2. *Recommends* that:

(a) A web site be created for the publication of the Code of Ethics inscribed with the UNESCO logo as a standard for professionals that is promoted by the Organization and the creation of a regularly updated list of dealers that adhere to the Code, along with information regarding voluntary contributions that have been made to the Committee Fund, if applicable;

(b) Registrations be accompanied by adequate endorsement issued by the appropriate national authorities who will ensure that eventual violations of the Code will result in the removal of the dealer from the list.

Recommendation No. 4

The Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation,

Considering that the country of origin's enhancement of its movable cultural heritage, and its inclusion within the framework of development strategies, represent an important asset for the promotion of inter-cultural dialogue,

Recalling the duties assigned by the Statutes, in particular article 4, in respect of bilateral negotiations and cooperation to facilitate the restitution of cultural property to its countries of origin and prevent illicit trafficking,

Considering that Resolution No. 27 of the UNESCO General Conference commits the Organization to:

(a) Promoting the adoption of the International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property and Object-ID;

(b) Supporting links among various databases related to theft of cultural property and encouraging the States with most experience in those areas to share their expertise with other States;

(c) Granting additional resources to the Committee in order to enable it to fulfil its duties and provide appropriate support to the secretariat;

Considering that, under the same Resolution, the General Conference has created the International Fund financed by voluntary contributions in order to support projects submitted to the Committee, granting priority to training activities and the reinforcement of museum systems in developing countries,

Also considering that the Committee now has the necessary mechanisms to establish a long-term strategy, but that these mechanisms are only voluntary,

Further considering that only an effective promotion policy using especially all of the traditional means of communication can reinforce this strategy, and that this action implies additional human and financial resources from the regular budget of UNESCO,

Given that the voluntary aspect of contributions to the Fund may considerably limit the scope of this mechanism,

Invites the Director-General of UNESCO to define and implement a strategy for the effective

promotion of the Fund by examining the possibility, within budgetary resources, to place financial and human resources at the disposal of the secretariat of the Committee from the regular UNESCO budget for the definition and launching of the strategy.

Recommendation No. 5

The Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation,

Concerned by the constant threat to tangible cultural heritage located throughout Pakistan which is subject to illegal excavations, including the recent ones which occurred in Mehrgart-Baluchistan and which date to prehistoric times,

Noting the desire of Pakistan to launch a campaign with the aim of raising the awareness of the local population of the value and importance of such sites, particularly those with prehistoric remains in Baluchistan, in order to get the local population actively involved in safeguarding these sites,

Aware that some items illegally excavated from areas along the Indus river in Baluchistan have been recently exhibited in another member State,

1. *Invites* UNESCO and its sister agencies to provide technical expertise and financial support for this purpose and for protection of archaeological sites;

2. *Recommends* that member States be asked to prohibit the exhibition and sale of artefacts illegally acquired from other States.

Recommendation No. 6

The Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation,

Reiterating Resolution No. 7 of the ninth session of the Committee in 1996 and Resolution No. 8 of the tenth session of the Committee in 1999,

Calls on the Director-General of UNESCO to take all necessary measures to search for cultural and archaeological objects illicitly exported from Iraq and to return them to their country of origin.

Recommendation No. 7

The Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation,

Aware that forged cultural objects are very frequently illicitly trafficked,

Noting that the failure to recognize forged cultural objects leads to a distorted perception of the history of nations,

Recommends that member States take effective measures to prevent the trade in forged cultural objects that are not clearly identified as replicas.

Recommendation No. 8

The Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation,

Expressing its concern at the increased number of cases of illicit trafficking brought to its attention,

Invites Member States to:

(a) Ensure that officials of customs and border control services are fully trained in their duties to apply the rules of the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property of 1970;

(b) Report any cases of illicit import, export or transfer of ownership of cultural property to the appropriate authorities in the State party concerned.

Recommendation No. 9

The Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation,

Concerned by the reports of major losses of movable cultural heritage from Afghanistan,

Noting the offer of Pakistan to survey potential markets in Pakistan where the stolen antiquities could be available for sale and in the context that most such items have so far proved to be forgeries,

Invites UNESCO to examine the possibility of a joint project by Pakistan and UNESCO with the possible collaboration of other organizations for surveying potential markets in Pakistan where stolen antiquities could be available for sale and making efforts to secure the genuine and authentic ones for return to Afghanistan.

Recommendation No. 10

The Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation,

Appealing to UNESCO member States to adhere to the Convention of 1970,

Noting with regret that some States have not proceeded to complete an inventory of their cultural heritage,

Recalling that Recommendation No. 9 of the tenth session of the Committee supports the organization of awareness-raising and training seminars, as well as conferences especially set up to target the youth of the various African regions,

Invites UNESCO to support member States according to the means available for the inventory of their cultural heritage in order to guarantee, on the one hand, better conservation at the national level and, on the other hand, better dissemination of information on this cultural property in the event of theft.

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Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 166
Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 27 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to request that the letter that was handed to you yesterday at your meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, Adalberto Rodriguez Giavarini, be distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Arnoldo M. **Listre**
Ambassador

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Annex to the letter dated 27 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Spanish]

New York, 26 September 2001

I have the honour to address myself to you at a time when the international community is having to face one of the greatest challenges that has ever arisen, as a consequence of the terrorist attacks perpetrated against the United States of America on 11 September 2001 and the grave threat posed by these criminal acts.

The Argentine Republic fully associates itself with all aspects of resolutions 1368 (2001) of the Security Council and 56/1 of the General Assembly as expressions of the international community's commitment to use all means at its disposal to eradicate the global threat to peace and security represented by terrorism.

This position coincides with the position unequivocally taken by Argentina, as a member of the Security Council, when the statement by the President of the Council of 29 July 1994 (S/PRST/1994/40) was adopted in connection with the terrorist attacks committed in Buenos Aires and London during that month, and is also consistent with Security Council resolution 1269 (1999) of 19 October 1999.

In this new situation, Argentina announces its decision to collaborate actively in the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, especially as regards working together urgently to bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of terrorist acts, as well as to hold accountable those who assist, support or protect them. At the same time, Argentina expresses its readiness to support other actions adopted within the framework of paragraph 5 of the above-mentioned resolution of the Security Council.

The terrorist acts that took place in the United States of America on 11 September 2001 brutally remind us that terrorism is a criminal and perverse method whose main victim is the innocent civilian population. In order to confront it, we have to act with conviction and in a coordinated way within the framework of a worldwide coalition.

Argentina, which in 1992 and 1994 was the victim of grave terrorist attacks of the same kind, stresses the need for a sustained international response.

The United Nations has a duty to promote measures to enable States, individually or collectively, to prevent and combat international terrorism in all its forms, through, inter alia, the elaboration and effective application of universal legal instruments. In this respect, Argentina has ratified the great majority of the conventions on terrorism which are in force and is moving ahead with the process of ratifying the rest.

At the domestic level, States must in turn develop the necessary norms to this end. In this respect, our country reiterates its firm commitment to continue to take all legislative, police, intelligence, financial and other measures to contribute to this common struggle.

At the inter-American level, Argentina supported the convening of the meeting of ministers for foreign affairs of the Organization of American States and the

meeting of ministers for foreign affairs within the framework of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. At these meetings, Argentina supported effective reciprocal assistance, the convening of a meeting of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, the elaboration of a draft inter-American convention against terrorism and the mandate given to the Commission on Hemispheric Security to accelerate its work with a view to holding a special conference on security.

My Government will continue to work within the framework of the United Nations with the goal of achieving concrete measures to confront this grave threat to international peace and security and civilized coexistence.

I request you to have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Adalberto **Rodriguez Giavarini**

United Nations A/56/415

General Assembly

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Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 166
Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 27 September 2001 from the Permanent Representatives of Japan and the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the resolution condemning the terrorist attack against the United States of America, adopted on 27 September 2001, during the fourteenth session of the World Tourism Organization, which was held at Seoul and Osaka consecutively (see annex).

We would be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 166.

(*Signed*) Yukio **Satoh**
Permanent Representative
Japan

(*Signed*) **Sun** Joun-yung
Permanent Representative
Republic of Korea

01-55517 (E) 270901

Annex to the letter dated 27 September 2001 from the Permanent Representatives of Japan and the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Resolution on the terrorist attacks in the United States of America

The WTO General Assembly,

I

Considering the tragic events that plunged into grief the United States of America, and indeed the world.

Considering that, on 11 September 2001, four civilian aircraft on US domestic service were destroyed by terrorist acts and that the crews, hundreds of passengers and thousands of innocent victims in buildings located in New York City and Washington D.C. were killed;

Aware that the immediate consequences of these acts were the closure of all United States civil airports and the disruption of domestic and international air services to, from and within North America;

Having listened to the declarations on this subject made by the Chairmen of the Regional Commissions and by all heads of delegation during the general debate;

Recalling its resolution A/RES/145(V) concerning the safety of civil aviation in relation to tourism;

Mindful that this unprecedented and brutal act of terrorism is likely to have profound, negative consequences for domestic and international tourism;

Conscious that stakeholders and professionals in the world-wide tourism industry look to WTO's General Assembly - as the supreme body of the institution responsible for tourism within the United Nations family - to take a positive and decisive lead in these circumstances;

1. Strongly condemns these and other heinous acts of terrorism that took place in its Member States, which have caused enormous loss of human life, destruction and damage;

2. Expresses its compassion and conveys its solidarity to the government and people of the United States of America and to other countries of the victims, in these sad and tragic circumstances, as well as its revulsion at terrorism, an enemy of peace and tourism;

3. Strongly supports United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/1 of 12 September 2001, which urgently called "for international cooperation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism" and stressed that "those responsible for aiding, supporting or harbouring the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of such acts will be held accountable" and Security Council resolution 1368 (2001), of the same date, which expressed determination "to combat by all means threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts";

4. Expresses its firm conviction that tourism is a resilient sector which has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to overcome problems and weather crises;

5. Pledges its full support to WTO Member States whose tourism industry has suffered as a direct result of these and other acts of terrorism;

6. Offers its assistance to all tourism stakeholders, and in particular to its partners in the air transport industry, viz. ICAO, IATA, airport authorities and airlines, in combating the decline in tourist travel, rebuilding consumer confidence and developing practical safety measures - with the understanding and cooperation of the travelling public - to diminish the risk of future terrorist acts, through all possible measures including WTO's Safety and Security Network and Task Force for Tourism;

II

Aware of the moral and ethical dimension of this situation and the relevance of the principles embodied in WTO's Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, adopted at its thirteenth session;

Considering that emotions feed prejudices which increase acts of discrimination, particularly in time of crisis;

1. Emphasizes that tolerance and understanding must be promoted, and strongly rejects any form of discrimination in tourism, whether directed against the individual or collectively against ethnic, cultural or religious groups;

2. Urges that, in accordance with the provisions of WTO's Global Code of Ethics, when governments issue travel advisories, they should offer objective, fair and balanced information, so as not to prejudice the tourism interests of the countries or destinations in question;

3. Expresses its firm conviction that dialogue and interchange through tourism deepens mutual understanding among civilizations and thereby contributes powerfully to preventing such problems as terrorism;

4. Urges Members to give their full support to the theme of the 2001 World Tourism Day "Tourism: a tool for peace and dialogue among civilizations", since - through the good will and sense of common purpose it engenders - tourism can assuredly play its part in resolving conflicts, settling differences and promoting lasting peace among peoples.

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The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

The situation in Central America

Report of the Secretary-General*

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/178 of 19 December 2000. It outlines the progress achieved by Central American countries relating to peace, freedom, democracy and economic development since my last report (A/55/465).

2. The General Assembly has discussed the situation in Central America since 1983, and in my yearly reports to the Assembly I have described the efforts of the peoples of the isthmus and those of the Organization to bring an end to the armed conflicts that plagued the region in the 1980s. As the fighting gave way to reconciliation initiatives and programmes designed to promote sustainable development, the foundations were being laid for new societies without the structural inequities that fostered war over two decades ago.

3. The United Nations has been intimately involved in peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace-building efforts in the region since 1989, when the leaders of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua requested verification of the Esquipulas II agreement that they had reached two years earlier (see A/42/521-S/19085, annex). Since then, both the Security Council and the General Assembly have fielded Missions mandated to accompany the region's peoples in their search for peace. The missions deployed with Security Council mandates, namely, the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) (1989-1992) and the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) (1991-1995), and those deployed under General Assembly mandates are: the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN) (1989-1990) and the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (1994 to the present). Noting significant progress in the implementation of the peace accords reached between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí Para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), ONUSAL was greatly reduced in 1995 and renamed the Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador (MINUSAL). That small follow-on Mission was, in turn, closed in 1998 and, in consultation with the parties, it was agreed that the office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in El Salvador would continue to follow pending issues.

* The footnote requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

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II. Central American process

Electoral processes

4. The democratic systems of Central America continue their consolidation as elections still unfold peacefully throughout the region. Clear and transparent institutions, multiparty systems and citizen participation are important elements of good governance, as countries enter what could be considered "second-generation" electoral processes. Elections are only one element in constructing effective democratic institutions that will promote peace and development for the citizenry of the region.

5. General elections are due in November 2001 in both Honduras and Nicaragua. On 4 November 2001, Nicaraguans will choose a President, national and departmental parliamentarians for the National Assembly and members of the Central American Parliament. There has been much concern in recent months over the partisan nature of the Supreme Electoral Council and some of the decisions that this electoral body has made in the current electoral process. On 4 September 2001, Magistrates of the Supreme Electoral Council signed an accord by which they assured the Nicaraguan people that they would fully carry out their duties throughout the rest of the electoral process. However, the tone of the current political campaign is a cause for concern. I therefore call upon all parties to exercise tolerance and to respect the will of the Nicaraguan people on election night.

6. On 25 November 2001, Hondurans are scheduled to vote in presidential, national and municipal elections. It is worth noting that, owing to modifications in the Electoral Law, this will be the first time that Hondurans living abroad will be entitled to vote. The voting, however, will be limited to various cities in the United States of America, where there is a high concentration of Honduran émigrés. I commend the presidential candidates on their "Manifesto of the Political Parties to the Honduran People", signed on 4 September 2001, whereby they commit themselves to reforming existing political and electoral structures after the elections in November. Both domestic and international actors should stand ready to assist the Honduran people in consolidating the democratic process.

7. Over the past decade, countries of the region have sought to develop legal and institutional frameworks that would allow for the participation of all political tendencies. In this respect, there is still much work to be done in establishing politically independent electoral bodies and ensuring conditions for genuine competition among all political parties. Furthermore, the strengthening of citizen participation in electoral and other political processes continues to be of utmost urgency. The coming elections in Honduras and Nicaragua will be important tests for the further consolidation of democracy in the region.

Rule of law

8. A number of resolutions were adopted at the April 2001 Summit of the Americas held in Québec City which should provide a firm foundation for the next stage in consolidating institutional human rights guarantees. With the end of armed conflict, human rights violations are no longer systematic nor the norm, yet violations do occur and the institutions designed to protect rights and to try violators are still weak and require strengthening. As reform efforts continue, justice sector professionals and human rights defenders may find support in statements of principle made in Québec City on strengthening the inter-American system on human rights; migration; the rights of women, children, adolescents and indigenous peoples; gender equality; freedom of opinion and expression; access to justice; the independence of the judiciary; and cultural diversity.

9. The election on 6 July of a new ombudsman in El Salvador is cause for great optimism that this important creation of the peace process will achieve the necessary durability to play its mandated role. Five years ago opinion polls indicated that the ombudsman's office (Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos) was the public institution most trusted by Salvadoran citizens. Since then, the office has deteriorated and, as pointed out in my last report, languished for long periods without adequate leadership. With a solid mandate from the Legislative Assembly, the new ombudsman should be in a position to extend protection throughout the country and to shape the office and its agenda to play its envisioned role. Both UNDP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights are planning programmes of support to rebuild this indispensable institution.

10. The growth of the ombudsman's office in Nicaragua (Oficina del Defensor de los Derechos

Humanos), created in 1999 is also a source of optimism. Three special ombudsmen have been appointed for women, indigenous peoples and youth, respectively. During 2000 and 2001, the office has made noteworthy contributions relating to democratic institutions, electoral processes and the right to personal security. Given the 10 per cent rise in criminality in 1999 and 2000, personal safety is of particular concern to Nicaraguans. UNDP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights are working with the police on developing a strategic human rights plan for the force, which has presented its own plan for institutional development.

11. In its recent human rights reports, MINUGUA has drawn attention to the worrisome deterioration in human rights compliance and public security, as well as the persistence of impunity in Guatemala. There has been an increase in crime, including armed assault and incidents of lynching. There is also a growing incidence of attacks and intimidation against judicial officials, human rights activists and journalists. Regrettably, cases are seldom adequately investigated by the authorities, a factor contributing to impunity for the perpetrators. During his May 2001 visit to Guatemala, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Param Cumaraswamy, also lamented the persistence of threats against judicial authorities and impunity for human rights violators. With funding from Norway and Sweden, UNDP is supporting the participation of civil society organizations in initiatives related to human rights and national reconciliation and also promoting their involvement in fulfilling recommendations of the Commission for Historical Clarification, Guatemala's "truth commission", which delivered its report in 1999 (see A/53/928, annex).

12. In November 2000, El Salvador's Attorney-General (Fiscal General) made a series of very grave public denunciations of irregularities within his own institution. Since then, the Attorney-General has sought to rid the institution of those deemed inappropriate to serve, in a process approved by the Legislative Assembly. It is hoped that these efforts will be carried out within a framework of due process to insure that it serves to ultimately strengthen the institution.

13. The wave of violence that has hit El Salvador in the post-war period has provoked assertions that the new criminal codes are too soft on criminals and should be made tougher. While there is room for improvement, the penal reforms constitute an important advance in human rights protection and the rule of law. Steps to roll back these improvements should be viewed with prudence. The introduction of oral arguments into some cases has made trials more expeditious and brought "users" of the justice system in direct contact with judges. In addition, the new criminal code has served to reduce the number of unsentenced prisoners. Extensive training of judges and the dismissal of those found ineffective or to have engaged in improprieties has increased the professionalism of the judiciary.

14. The National Civil Police (PNC) forces grew out of the peace processes in both Guatemala and El Salvador, and represent a significant achievement by placing public security functions in civilian hands. In Guatemala, the PNC has surpassed the 20,000 agents projected in the peace accords and now has a presence in most municipalities around the country. Yet the force still demonstrates serious shortcomings in deployment which prevent it from properly fulfilling its tasks. These limitations are cited to justify the participation of the armed forces in public security functions. The use of the military in this fashion is detrimental to efforts to demilitarize public security and constitutes a serious setback to both civilian rule and the new police force. Likewise, it is to be hoped that the 200 joint military-police patrol units deployed in the Salvadoran countryside do not become a semi-permanent strategy to increase police manpower and firepower.

15. El Salvador's PNC is officially subject to oversight by both the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office and the Police Inspectorate General, and has two additional internal mechanisms of control, one that investigates public complaints against the police, and another unit that investigates agents' involvement in crimes. Unfortunately, all these monitoring schemes have proved insufficient. In the initial years after the peace accords, the PNC earned respect and confidence from the public, hard-earned capital that has, unfortunately, been jeopardized over the last four years as accusations of human rights violations and infiltration by criminal groups have sharply increased. By June 2000, the situation had reached such crisis proportions with accumulated cases, including evidence of police involvement in kidnapping, that the PNC was obliged to request a special legislative decree allowing extraordinary measures to expedite the

investigation and dismissal of wrongdoers. It is paramount that the PNC develop its own internal mechanisms of oversight and accountability if it is ever to earn the trust and respect of the Salvadoran citizens it was created to protect.

Regional trade and economic cooperation

16. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the gross domestic product (GDP) for the Central American region, excluding Belize and Panama, grew by 3.2 per cent in 2000 compared with 4.2 per cent growth in 1999. Consequently, the per capita GDP increased by only 0.7 per cent. This trend was strongly influenced by the downturn of the Costa Rican economy. The GDP of the four other countries — El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua — in fact increased 3.6 per cent in 2000, having grown by 3.2 per cent in 1999. The GDP of Panama grew by 2.8 per cent in 2000, down from 3.2 per cent growth in 1999 and from more than 4 per cent in the two preceding years; the GDP per capita rose only 1.3 per cent in 2000. In Belize, the GDP grew by 10.1 per cent in 2000, following a 5.9 per cent rise in 1999; the rate of GDP per capita was 7.7 per cent.

17. In its human development index, UNDP places Central American countries in the category of nations with "medium human development", except Costa Rica, which is placed among the highest developed countries. The human development index is calculated on the basis of four indicators: life expectancy at birth; adult literacy; level of schooling; and GDP per capita. The indices of the Central American countries have improved steadily within the last 25 years, and their rankings compared to the rest of the world have not significantly changed within this period. The unemployment rate in the region has fallen 1 to 2 per cent in the five years preceding 2000, although in Nicaragua it has dropped more dramatically, according to ECLAC.

18. The region's financial situation has continued to stabilize and structural reforms have been implemented, yet Central America is still burdened by heavy external debt. In December 2000, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank approved a debt relief package for Nicaragua under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative. Previously, Honduras had been granted a similar package. Final award of the package is contingent on the satisfactory implementation of a fully participatory poverty reduction strategy, as well as the participation of other creditors in the operation. The World Bank estimates that Nicaragua will complete all the necessary steps by the end of 2002. It is hoped that creditors will support these Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiatives in the region and that regional Governments will strive to enact the necessary reforms to ensure sustainable economic growth on the basis of transparency and accountability. In that context, it should be emphasized that debt relief is not a substitute for development assistance, but rather a complementary tool.

19. Strengthening regional economic cooperation among the countries continues to be an important challenge for development in the region. In March 2001, Mexico launched the Puebla-Panama Plan, a comprehensive initiative involving nine states in southern Mexico and all the Central American countries. The plan envisions, among other areas, new investment in infrastructure, human development, disaster prevention and environmental protection. Heads of States from all the countries involved met in San Salvador in June 2001 and decided to implement the plan.

20. Other regional economic initiatives have been discussed, including a comprehensive regional free trade agreement; expanding the customs union of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala to the rest of the region; establishing a mechanism for the resolution of trade disputes; and joint negotiation of new free trade agreements. The Central American Common Market, established in 1960, continues to be central in these discussions and for advancing regional trade in general. Governments are urged to continue these constructive efforts to enhance regional economic cooperation in order to improve the financial outlook for the region as a whole.

21. At the Third Summit of the Americas, held in Québec City in April 2001, Central American Heads of State joined their counterparts from every country in the western hemisphere, with the exception of Cuba. It was agreed, inter alia, that negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas should be concluded no later than January 2005, and that the Agreement should enter into force no later than the following December. Furthermore, it was agreed that the Agreement should be balanced, comprehensive and consistent with World Trade Organization rules. Emerging from the Summit was a series of decisions to be implemented by the

Organization of American States, several of which were related to trade.

Regional and extraregional institution-building

22. Greater regional integration would further the consolidation of peace and development in Central America. In March 2001, the Regional Consultative Group of Central America met in Spain to follow up on a similar meeting held in Sweden in 1999. On that occasion, Central American Governments, international institutions and donor Governments signed the Stockholm Declaration, which called for joint efforts to reconstruct and transform Central America in the aftermath of hurricane Mitch (October 1998). The "Madrid proposal", a strategic framework for the transformation and modernization of Central America in the twenty-first century, was submitted by the Central American Governments, after extensive consultation with relevant partners. The proposal aims to enhance development and improve living conditions through sustained economic growth and a more even distribution of its fruits. The areas of focus are: reduction of social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities; transformation of the productive sector; sustainable management of natural resources; and increased civil society participation in development. In practice, the proposal is to be implemented through initiatives to reform and harmonize the region's legislation and institutions, as well as specific development projects. I call upon the donor community to support the "Madrid proposal", and upon the Central American Governments to take the necessary steps to implement the plan.

23. The secretariat of the Central American Integration System continues to promote regional coordination, according to the decisions of the summits of Central American presidents, as well as the decisions of the Council of Ministers of External Relations. The April 2001 Québec Summit had an extensive agenda, which included political and economic issues concerning the Americas beyond the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, and a wide-ranging action plan was adopted. At its meeting in San José in June 2001, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) debated and considered a series of proposed reforms to the inter-American human rights system. These will be considered and refined in coming years, a healthy exercise that should serve to strengthen human rights protection in the region.

24. For the second time, Central American Heads of State were invited to attend the Rio Group Summit, held in August 2001 in Santiago. Among other issues, the agenda included the present economic crisis, particularly in Argentina, and contemporary economic issues, such as the widening technology gap between the developed and developing world.

III. Natural disasters and environmental problems

25. Over the past five years, a series of natural disasters has demonstrated the region's natural fragility. In 1997, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua were hit by the meteorological phenomenon known as "El Niño", which caused drought in some areas and flooding in others. The following year, hurricane Mitch ravaged the region, causing tremendous damage and suffering. Early in 2001, El Salvador was ravaged by a series of earthquakes. The paucity of rain since June 2001 has severely affected the whole region as large parts of the harvest have been damaged or destroyed, causing hunger and disastrous conditions, especially in Honduras and Nicaragua. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), the drought had affected 1.5 million people by mid-August.

26. At the same time, Central America has, simultaneously, one of the world's most varied and unique ecological environments. This biodiversity is threatened by human exploitation and natural disasters, with irreparable damage to both nature and humans.

27. A common feature of both natural disasters and environmental problems is that the poorest, particularly in rural areas, are the most vulnerable to, and those who suffer most from, the damage caused. The poorest are not only more directly and physically affected, but natural disasters and environmental problems also hamper their access to natural resources, such as water, soil and food.

28. Many efforts at different levels have been undertaken to reduce the region's social and ecological vulnerability. In the Stockholm Declaration of 1999, the Central American Governments agreed that the overriding goal of the reconstruction and

transformation of the region had to be the reduction of ecological vulnerability. At the Summit of the Americas in April 2001 and at the Regional Consultative Group meeting held in Madrid in March 2001, issues relating to natural disasters and environmental problems also had a high priority. Furthermore, they constitute an integral part of several regional initiatives under the auspices of OAS, the Central American Integration System, the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America and the Puebla-Panama Plan. One of the latest regional comprehensive endeavours is "the Meso-American Biological Corridor". With this, the United Nations, in conjunction with the Central American Commission on Environment and several others, aims to create a system of corridors to protect biodiversity and mitigate the effects of climate change, as well as promote long-term sustainable development of the communities living in and around the corridor.

IV. Organization of American States

29. Costa Rica hosted the thirty-first regular session of the General Assembly of OAS in San José from 3 to 5 June 2001. On that occasion, announcements were made about important new contributions to the permanent fund for the peaceful settlement of territorial disputes among member States, established at the OAS Windsor General Assembly in June 2000.

30. Monies from this fund have allowed OAS to play a leading role in reducing tensions and seeking political solutions to the region's border controversies. The fund has received donations from a range of countries, including some outside the region. This strong commitment testifies to a recognition that for the region to move forward and stabilize, these long-standing controversies must be resolved. This fund has supported OAS work on both the Honduras-Nicaragua and the Belize-Guatemala cases.

Bilateral issues: border disputes

31. Since my last report, border disagreements continue to create tension as well as diplomatic clashes in some parts of the region. Discord between Honduras and Nicaragua continues over claims to part of the Caribbean Sea. A low point was reached in August 2001 when the countries accused each other of concentrating troops on their common border. Belize and Guatemala's border dispute, stemming from Guatemala's disavowal of an 1859 treaty establishing the borders, has evolved positively in the past year, as a result of firm political will and OAS mediation efforts. Nevertheless, these disagreements remain obstacles to lasting peace in the region.

32. Although there have been some setbacks on the Honduras-Nicaragua issue, both Governments have continued to seek a peaceful resolution through negotiations under the auspices of OAS. In July 2001, an OAS Civilian Verification Mission conducted the first of three on-site visits to Honduras and Nicaragua, pursuant to an agreement to monitor compliance with measures designed to promote confidence between the two countries.

33. In November 2000, Belizean and Guatemalan officials endorsed an OAS-sponsored confidence-building agreement, calling for the two countries to cooperate and prevent incidents, as well as to stop evictions of people living along the disputed border. Following the discovery of new settlements in early 2001, an emergency meeting was held in Miami, Florida, United States, which resulted in the drawing up of a plan of action for implementing the OAS confidence-building agreement, namely, methods for determining the location of certain settlements and removing illegal ones. In subsequent meetings, discussions were held on time frames and procedures whereby each country would justify its territorial claim. At a meeting in April 2001, the parties agreed to seek the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to begin a census of settlers in the "adjacency zone". Finally, on 18 July 2001, facilitators named by the two countries presented a series of recommendations to extend the facilitation process for another year, until 31 August 2002.

V. United Nations

United Nations in El Salvador

34. As reported to the General Assembly (A/53/315), after the final closing of the Support Unit of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in El Salvador in June 1998, UNDP was assigned to monitor pending aspects of the peace accords, and to explore ways of supporting government efforts to mainstream some of these issues into the broader development agenda. To this end, UNDP and the Department of Political Affairs have developed a joint mechanism to provide

continuing follow-up. This process has been a fruitful one, although in some cases progress has been slow, given that, in order to be fully realized, these issues must be embraced at both the national and municipal level.

35. Implementation of the remaining provisions has taken place in a difficult economic climate, making equitable development policies all the more necessary. Beginning in 1995, the economy began to experience an unexpected slowdown. Since 2000, the economy has initiated a modest recovery. However, with an average annual growth rate of less than 3 per cent over the last five years, and with the population growing more than 2 per cent annually, the possibilities appear limited for continuing to reduce poverty and raise human development levels.

36. Although poverty has diminished over the last decade, according to the UNDP *Human Development Report 2001*, in El Salvador, 47.5 per cent of the population still lives below the poverty line, 27.4 per cent in relative poverty and 20.1 per cent in extreme poverty. The rural-urban gap has widened; for each poor household in an urban area in 1999, there were 1.7 in the countryside. This gap is even wider for those living in absolute poverty. This situation worsened after two earthquakes struck the country early in 2001. Poverty increased by 3.7 percentage points, from 47.5 per cent to 51.2 per cent, although the impact was even higher in some departments.

37. UNDP monitored the land transfer programme in its final administrative phase, which included issuing titles and documentation to programme beneficiaries. The parties have indicated that they consider the programme to be concluded. It is important to recall, however, the repeated concerns raised in my reports regarding the need to integrate these properties and environs into broader rural development schemes in order to ensure sustainability and avoid recreating pockets of rural poverty.

38. The programme of rural human settlements was monitored throughout 1998 and 1999 by a tripartite round table that included the Government, the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional and UNDP. During this period there were important advances, despite pending cases of some properties the owners of which remain unwilling to sell and some families who do not wish to be relocated.

39. In early 2000 a working group of the Agrarian Reform Institute, the Democratic Peasants Association and UNDP issued its findings on the status of 51 properties which exceeded the constitutional limit of 245 hectares. This group also established mechanisms for the transfer and assignment of the holdings identified in excess of the legal limit. While agreement was reached on the final number of properties and the process to be followed, the actual transfer and assignment processes, through established channels, will require more time to ensure full implementation.

40. The Fund for the Wounded and War-Disabled has been the most complex and contentious of the remaining items on the peace accords agenda. One central issue has been the difficulty in definitively establishing the total number of potential beneficiaries. As stated in my last report (A/55/465), the parties agreed in September 2000 to a proposed methodology that would help to determine the number of worthy new beneficiaries to be incorporated, thereby getting the programme back on track. Now, one year later, the parties are called upon again to redouble their efforts so that this remaining outstanding area of the accords may also be brought to satisfactory completion before January 2002.

United Nations in Guatemala

41. December 2000 marked four years since the Agreement on a firm and lasting peace was signed in Guatemala, and six years since the establishment of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA). According to a timetable fixed in 1996, implementation of the major provisions of the peace agreements and international verification of the process was slated to end last December. As reiterated in my sixth verification report to the General Assembly (A/55/793-S/2001/139), which covered the period from 1 July 2000 to 31 March 2001, implementation of the peace agreements has slowed since 1998. Furthermore, many Guatemalans feel that the peace process has had little discernible impact on their lives. The fact that many do not feel they have benefited from the accords threatens the sustainability and strength of the peace process. The lack of meaningful progress over the past year has been especially disappointing in the light of the firm commitment made by President Alfonso Portillo when he took office in January 2000. On that occasion, he embraced the accords as an obligation of

the State and stated his intention to promote social policies based on the agreements.

42. Yet as the December 2000 deadline approached, it was clear that a significant number of commitments were pending, leading to a rescheduling of those commitments in a new timetable covering the period 2000-2004. This new timetable was presented publicly by the Commission to Follow up the Implementation of the Peace Agreements on 12 December 2000. Professing their renewed commitment to the peace process, the President of Guatemala, the President of Congress and the President of the Supreme Court signed as honorary witnesses. On that occasion, President Portillo stated that strict compliance with the new timetable, through the combined efforts of the State and civil society, would give considerable impetus to Guatemala's democratic development.

43. One of the most troubling episodes relates to the Fiscal Pact, which was negotiated with some difficulty during 2000, but not immediately implemented on adoption. This delay led to a loss of momentum and allowed for opposition to build to some fiscal reforms that are long overdue in Guatemala. In an effort to regain lost ground, the Government drafted its own fiscal package and secured its passage by Congress in July 2001, overcoming significant resistance. This fiscal package includes greater sanctions against tax evasion, increased taxation on certain goods and services and a controversial hike in the value added tax (IVA) from 10 to 12 per cent. These tax increases should bring about an overall increase in the tax-to-GDP ratio from the current 9.7 per cent to 11 per cent in 2002, although this would still fall short of the 12 per cent target. In order to finance initiatives to foster social and economic development, the agreements oblige the Government to enact such fiscal reform. It is to be hoped that Guatemalan authorities will now move quickly to implement the remaining elements of the original Fiscal Pact to ensure compliance with the peace agenda's commitments in this area.

44. General dissatisfaction with the peace process, increasing public insecurity and the economic crisis have provoked escalating social and political tension. This discontent translated into support for a national strike called by the private sector on 1 August 2001 — coinciding with other demonstrations — to protest the Government's controversial fiscal package. Some of the protests grew violent, prompting the Government to declare a state of siege in the department of Totonicapán and deploy military units in the area. Concerned about the faltering peace process and the difficult situation, I sent my Chef de Cabinet, Iqbal Riza, to Guatemala in July. After wide consultations, he proposed launching a dialogue to help diminish political polarization and permit progress in implementation of the peace agenda. Although endorsed by Congress, prevailing conditions did not permit initiation of the dialogue. However, in the past few months, leading members of the academic, religious and political communities have renewed the initiative. I strongly encourage these efforts to bring about a dialogue that will contribute to breaking the current impasse.

45. For peace-building to be successful, special attention must be directed to demobilized combatants and displaced populations, but to date compliance with the agreements on resettlement and incorporation into society — specifically programmes for sustainable integrated development — has been insufficient. While some advances have been made with land and housing projects, these communities would also benefit from the elaboration by the State of an overall policy on integrated rural development. It is to be hoped that the long-anticipated reform to the Electoral and Political Parties Law will incorporate all the relevant commitments of the peace agreements, and will soon be adopted by Congress. This Law should encourage more citizens to vote, especially in rural areas where voters must often travel great distances to polling stations.

46. The implementation of the commitments made to the indigenous peoples is also inadequate. Rectification of the historical discrimination and marginalization suffered by the indigenous peoples is fundamental to the consolidation of a democratic, participatory, just and multicultural State. The indigenous agreement recognizes both individual rights and collective cultural rights, and promotes the full participation of indigenous peoples at all levels of decision-making in Guatemalan society. To date, insufficient will has been demonstrated to make these commitments a reality.

47. The peace agreements emphasize that justice sector reform is a fundamental element in modernization of the State. To that end, the Commission for Monitoring and Supporting the Strengthening of the Justice System, established in January 2000, has become an important forum for dialogue between civil society and State institutions.

Also to be commended is the Commission's extensive participatory evaluation of the justice system that produced useful recommendations. However, overall, the sector shows little sign of significant structural improvement.

48. In June 2001, a verdict was finally handed down in connection with the March 1998 killing of Monsignor Juan José Gerardi Conedera two days after he presented a groundbreaking report on human rights violations committed during the 36-year armed conflict in Guatemala. The investigation and trial have been considered a test of the political will and capacity of Guatemalan judicial authorities to ensure due process. MINUGUA has closely followed this high-profile murder case since the evening when Monsignor Gerardi was fatally attacked in his garage. As previously reported, the Mission's monitoring has revealed persistent, significant weaknesses in the judicial system and a lack of will on the part of certain authorities to further the cause of justice. Some justice sector professionals and witnesses linked to the case have been attacked and threatened. In the light of these difficulties, it is important to note that the verdict and sentencing in the Gerardi case were seen, both nationally and internationally, as a milestone in the struggle against impunity and in establishing a society grounded in the rule of law.

49. Guatemala has made significant advances by signing or ratifying a number of important international human rights instruments. The leadership that has been demonstrated by the Presidential Human Rights Commission (COPREDEH) in developing human rights policy and promoting ratification of these legal instruments is highly commendable. These initiatives by the Commission should be continued and strengthened.

50. The coordinated peace-building efforts of MINUGUA and the rest of the United Nations system demonstrate the Organization's ongoing commitment to full implementation of the peace accords. In the light of what remains to be done, the parties had requested that the United Nations continue to support the peace process until 2003 (A/55/389). The General Assembly, in its resolution 55/177 of 19 December 2000, authorized the renewal of the mandate of MINUGUA until 31 December 2001 and decided to reconsider the peace-building phase at its fifty-sixth session. In November 2000, MINUGUA embarked on a phased withdrawal, projected to conclude in 2003. The Mission reconfigured its presence around the country, reducing the staff in its Guatemala City headquarters and the regional offices by 45 per cent.

51. In the months leading up to the Consultative Group meeting planned for November 2001, I call upon the Government to affirm its own commitment to the peace agenda by meeting its obligations. The November gathering will also offer the international community the opportunity to renew its support for peace-building in Guatemala.

United Nations operational activities

52. The United Nations system has been involved in a wide range of activities in each Central American country, while cooperating closely with other donors. Special emphasis has been given to poverty alleviation. UNDP has actively supported the inclusion of both Honduras and Nicaragua in the Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative. Furthermore, substantial support was provided in preparation and elaboration of poverty reduction strategies for these countries in partnership with ECLAC, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

53. A number of activities have been initiated to strengthen the capacity of civil society, such as formulation of proposals within the National Council of Economic and Social Planning in Nicaragua by UNDP with support from Denmark. Significant assistance has been earmarked to improve the living conditions of rural populations in both Nicaragua and Honduras.

54. Several agencies, in particular WFP, have contributed with important support and vital supplies to combat the effects of the severe drought ravaging Central America this year. Improving the access to health care, in particular for those affected by HIV/AIDS, has had high priority at both the regional and national levels, and the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, WFP and the United Nations Population Fund have all launched numerous initiatives. Enhancement of food security has likewise been a significant focus of the United Nations system.

55. On migration issues, IOM and others have developed a series of activities in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua to facilitate the social and economic integration of migrant populations. For example, in Costa Rica, IOM has

provided technical assistance to the Government in elaborating an amnesty law for immigrants and the implementation of a public information campaign. Furthermore, UNDP has launched a bi-national initiative that seeks to promote closer cooperation between civil societies in Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

VI. Observations

56. As important as ensuring the foundations for good governance is the need to improve other human development indicators and combat the poverty that fuelled the social and political tensions that ignited armed conflict. Such a national strategy is best situated within a framework of consensus-building, effective participation and political pluralism. It is from the constant practice and interaction of these factors that democratic political culture is built. I am confident that the peoples of Central America will pursue this goal with renewed energy.

57. The new civilian-led police forces are a significant step forward in El Salvador and Guatemala. Yet there are serious signs of diversion from the democratic, rights-respecting model used in their design. Both must buttress internal oversight mechanisms and halt joint police-military patrols. The continuing involvement of the armed forces in public security functions could lead Central America into the cycle of violence and repression that led so tragically to war in the past. The elaboration of a coherent national public security strategy would ensure both effective coordination between different agencies and optimal use of scarce resources.

58. It is commendable that national ombudsmen have been appointed throughout the region. These offices have the potential to serve as important institutional guarantors to human rights protection and, in some instances, to help ensure that the State provides appropriate services and protection to the citizenry. I call upon regional leaders to allocate adequate resources to the ombudsmen, and to encourage them in their watchdog function. In addition, the reform of justice sector institutions must be prioritized throughout the isthmus, if Central America is to fully embrace the rule of law by ensuring due process.

59. All involved actors — Governments, civil society and the donor community — are urged to do their utmost to reduce the damaging effects of natural disasters. Although natural disasters are often not preventable, there is a need for effective policies to reduce the damage and protect the most vulnerable groups, once they do occur. In El Salvador, large numbers of people left homeless or jobless by the earthquakes have not been given adequate assistance, and I call upon the authorities to attend to the needs of this population as a matter of urgency. I also urge enhanced efforts to promote sustainable environmental development throughout the whole region and to incorporate environmental concerns in all relevant activities.

60. I commend the Central American Governments, as well as the Organization of American States, for their active participation in seeking peaceful settlements to their differences. The peaceful resolution of border disagreements is crucial for regional integration, national development and lasting peace on the isthmus.

61. Although elections alone do not make a democracy, I would like to reiterate the importance of independent electoral structures for the further consolidation of democracy in the region. The fact that, for over a decade, citizens of all of the countries of the isthmus have been able to exercise their choice at the ballot box represents an important development for Central America. Nevertheless, effective reforms are required so that electoral structures can be considered fully transparent, legitimate and non-partisan. Partisan electoral bodies can only serve to impede the democratization process and create disillusionment. One indication of that is the rising level of abstentionism, perhaps owing to increased discontent and lack of confidence in the region's political institutions. Initiatives on the part of Governments to broaden participation among the populace, as well as increased accountability and transparency, are still needed.

62. While the El Salvador peace accords are no longer the yardstick by which democracy-building is measured, as in the past, it is important that they be recognized as an historical watershed, and their original political and moral intent safeguarded as national patrimony. Even as the parties to the accords take steps to complete what remains to be implemented in coming months, the committed protection and strengthening of the democratic institutions the accords created is a duty for all Salvadoran citizens. All national actors must be vigilant to ensure that these

institutions are not subjected to influences that distort their original mandate, diminish their importance or allow them to fall victim to political interests. There have been some disquieting tendencies in recent years with respect to some of these institutions, and I urge the Salvadoran people to use the same commitment and enterprise that brought them to the peace table to protect these hard-won gains.

63. Guatemala's civil war was the longest in the region and, as such, the peace and progress that has been achieved is to be commended. The country's peace accords are far-reaching and, if fully implemented, have the potential to transform Guatemalan society in several key areas. The responsibility to translate the accords' provisions into concrete policy must be shared by all Guatemalans and, in particular, the parties to the agreement.

64. Today, Central America has been transformed by the strides taken in the last decade. While armed conflict and the consistent violation of human rights have ended, the region has a long way to go before the poverty and structural inequalities which gave rise to conflict are overcome. I would like to reiterate my solidarity with and respect for the accomplishments of the peoples of the region, while issuing a call for renewed commitment to tackle the root causes of conflict. The United Nations system stands ready to contribute in that endeavour.

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Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 121
Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Common services at Geneva

Report of the Secretary-General*

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 54/255 of 7 April 2000, the General Assembly endorsed, inter alia, the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) contained in its report entitled "The United Nations system common services at Geneva, part I, Overview of administrative cooperation and coordination" (A/53/787) and the comments of the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Coordination thereon (A/54/635). Further, the Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Coordination to take concrete steps to enhance common services, and invited legislative organs of other organizations to take similar action on the basis of the resolution and requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-sixth session on the measures taken in that consideration. The present report is submitted in response to that request and provides, in section II, a listing of existing cooperation among specialized agencies and organizations based at Geneva. Section III contains an update of the progress achieved in setting up a more formal common services structure in Geneva.

II. Cooperation among organizations based at Geneva

2. It is worth recalling that, in spite of the statutory autonomy of each specialized agency and organization based at Geneva, significant collaboration has developed among their executive heads, resulting in increased contacts among counterparts at all levels in the various organizations. The results of those efforts are mentioned below by area of activity and described in a non-exhaustive way. The second part of the report of JIU on the United Nations system common services at Geneva (A/55/856) contained a review of the most significant manifestations of those efforts, namely, the International Computing Centre (ICC), the Joint Medical Service, the Training and Examinations Section (since renamed Staff Development and Learning Section), the Diplomatic Pouch Service and the Joint Purchase Service.

A. Budget and finance

3. Periodic meetings, some of which are organized by the secretariat of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, among senior finance and budget officers are held to discuss matters of common interest, such as projected inflation rates for Geneva, accounting

* The foonote requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

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standards, software for electronic payments, credit cards and banking arrangements.

B. Telecommunications

4. Organizations exchange experience in negotiating advantageous telecommunication rates with carriers. New global contracts with carriers will provide for value-added features to the virtual private network which would allow other organizations and even field locations to join the global contract, allowing better connectivity as well as economies of scale. Efforts are under way to share telephone directory information in compatible phone systems so as to simplify dialling and allow individual caller identification. A video-conference bridge has been deployed, allowing any organization to establish multi-site video-conference sessions over regular connections but also over networks, such as the Geneva Diplomatic Community Network (GDCNET), a facility provided by the International Telecommunications Union. A project will be launched in the near future shortly to set up a global contract for mobile telephony.

C. Information technology

5. Organizations share the data-processing resources of ICC and collaborate in its management, through their participation in the ICC Management Committee. Licensing agreements negotiated by some organizations for standard computer operating and applications software are made available to the other organizations, as are volume purchase agreements for the acquisition of information technology equipment; this facility is also accorded to permanent missions. Progress is being made in the development of GDCNET. The facility, which links common system organizations and permanent missions, allows users to listen to ongoing meeting activities in the conference rooms of other organizations or even obtain video transmissions over the Network. Joint seminars have been organized to keep managers abreast of innovations and trends, such as e-commerce and Internet security.

6. Through the implementation of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) provides a computer system designed to address administrative tasks in an integrated framework. The Office has provided training and conversion assistance, and continues to provide support to both departments and organizations which have chosen to use IMIS.

D. Travel and transportation

7. The United Nations Office at Geneva has traditionally processed travel documents for organizations at Geneva (mainly the United Nations laissez-passer). Experiments have been conducted with regard to sharing of freight-forwarding contracts, arrangements for the removal and shipment of personal effects and household goods, and joint travel agency contracts. Joint meetings among travel managers are held to exchange information and views as to the future strategy towards changes in the travel agent industry and the air travel market and to explore possibilities for joint negotiations with preferred air carriers for net fare arrangements and volume discounts.

E. Medical services and insurance

8. Organizations collaborate in operating the Joint Medical Service. Several organizations share medical insurance schemes.

F. Security services

9. The United Nations Office at Geneva provides a full range of organized security services to two other agencies. Negotiations have taken place to provide such services under similar modalities to a third organization. The Office also provides ad hoc security support upon request to other agencies.

G. Procurement and contracting

10. The Geneva Joint Purchase Service at Geneva, which has traditionally focused on the joint procurement of paper and office supplies, has recently decided to widen the scope of its activities and to exchange information on major service contracts, such as the cleaning of premises, and explore possibilities of joint negotiations with the suppliers of such services. It has mandated the United Nations Office at Geneva to negotiate on behalf of its members a contract for electrical power in anticipation of market deregulation.

11. Volume purchase agreements negotiated by the United Nations Office at Geneva for the supply of stationery and office supplies and for the purchase of personal computers and peripherals have been made available for use by other organizations. Some organizations are starting to include clauses in their general contracting provisions that oblige suppliers to extend the same preferential conditions to other United Nations organizations.

12. Organizations attend on a regular basis the annual meetings of the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group and the meetings of its subgroups. The Working Group actively promotes common approaches to purchasing policies and the enhancement of professionalism in the procurement activities of agencies. This participation also contributes considerably to the exchange of information and to the establishment of professional contacts and cooperative ventures at Geneva.

H. Library and archiving services

13. All Geneva-based organizations have joined the United Nations System Electronic Information Acquisition Consortium that was established in 1998 and is led by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in New York. This consortium makes commercial information products, such as *The Economist* Intelligence Unit, *NewsEdge* etc., available on desktops and in libraries throughout the participating organizations at a fraction of the price of individual paper subscriptions. The International Labour Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the United Nations Office at Geneva (through the United Nations Bibliographic Information System) have made the catalogues of their libraries available through the United Nations System Shared Cataloguing and Public Access System, thereby simplifying access to this information by the public and reducing cataloguing time for new acquisitions by allowing participating organizations to retrieve the cataloguing information filed by sister organizations. The World Health Organization and the International Trade Centre have requested that their libraries be included as well. The International Labour Organization and the United Nations, as well as several other organizations outside Geneva, have pooled their information about the location of depository libraries and created a web-based search facility to simplify the process of finding document repositories throughout the world. Efforts are under way to expand the service to include more organizations and all field-based information centres. Projects of a similar nature have been implemented in the area of archiving.

14. The Committee of International Archivists at Geneva, in which representatives from most Geneva-based international organizations take part, was set up and has been working on a common approach to records and archives management, especially in the fields of archival preservation and appraisal. As a first step, efforts focused on training in connection with new technologies. Workshops on the preservation of paper and other materials (e.g., audio-visual, photographs and electronic records) and on the appraisal of electronic records were convened in the biennium 1999-2000.

I. Management of human resources

15. Common system organizations jointly undertake salary and cost-of-living surveys at Geneva. They have worked out a common job classification standard for General Service personnel. A number of training courses, especially in the language area, are provided by the United Nations Office at Geneva and by the International Labour Organization. Some staff-related services are handled by the United Nations Office at Geneva on behalf of other United Nations Secretariat entities, as well as bodies affiliated with the United Nations, in particular those concerning relations with the host country for the provision of Cartes de légitimation, the administration of justice (Joint Appeals Board and Joint Disciplinary Committee) and compensation for work-related accidents (Advisory Board on Compensation Claims).

J. Management of facilities

16. Under the auspices of the Fondation des immeubles pour les institutions internationales, a number of informal collegial contacts between technical managers of Geneva-based organizations have taken place to exchange information on building efficiency and related techniques. The recent creation, at the initiative of the Senior Project Coordinator, Common Services, of the Office of Central Support Services at the United Nations Headquarters, of the inter-agency network of facilities managers, in which some Geneva-based agencies participate, also provides

a permanent platform for the exchange of information, a comparison of best practice and other areas of mutual interest.

K. Mail and Diplomatic Pouch services

17. The United Nations Office at Geneva has always operated Diplomatic Pouch services for all Geneva-based organizations. Over the years, on-time performance has been constantly improved, many new Pouch destinations have been created and rates have been negotiated downwards, while the volume of mail transported and received has risen dramatically. The Office also provides mailing services to three other Geneva entities.

L. Conference activities

18. There have been long-standing arrangements for the sharing of conference space and for the rental of large facilities not available at the site of the organizing agency. There has also been consultation on the timing of important meetings in order to avoid unnecessary competition for space and other resources (e.g., interpreters). Agencies have negotiated joint rates for freelance interpreters under the auspices of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The heads of interpretation services meet on a regular basis to exchange views on common areas of concern.

III. Structured approach to common services at Geneva

19. In his comments on the above-mentioned JIU reports (A/54/635 and A/55/856/Add.1), the Secretary-General indicated that action would be taken to establish the Management Ownership Committee at Geneva under the chairmanship of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, regrouping all organizations and agencies of the United Nations common system at Geneva. He indicated that it would be left to the Management Ownership Committee to determine the scope and pace of implementation of arrangements for common services at Geneva, with due regard for the mandates, roles, tasks and rules of each individual organization. The Management Ownership Committee has been launched accordingly.

20. The Management Ownership Committee is composed of the heads of all Geneva-based specialized agencies, the United Nations Office at Geneva and United Nations programmes, as well as of the World Trade Organization and the International Trade Centre, under the chairmanship of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Committee established a three-tier structure, as follows:

(a) Management Ownership Committee;

(b) Task Force on Common Services;

(c) Technical working groups, each dealing with one or more topics where common services would be desirable.

21. According to its terms of reference, the Committee is to (a) establish and maintain high-level support for and commitment to common services initiatives among organizations of the United Nations system based at Geneva; (b) provide executive direction to its Task Force on Common Services; and (c) review the progress report of the Task Force and take decisions on the related recommendations.

22. The Task Force on Common Services is composed of the heads of administration, or equivalent, of participating organizations and agencies. It continues to be chaired by the former Director of the Division of Administration at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Task Force is responsible for: (a) recommending initiatives or actions which will lead to the establishment of a common service or the reinforcement of an existing one; (b) reviewing proposals and recommendations put forward by the working groups on common services; and (c) defining the degree of commitment of cooperation, participation and human and financial resources required from participating organizations.

23. The working groups are composed of technical representatives and resource persons of each participating organization. The working groups are responsible for: (a) assessment of critical existing central, shared or common services with a view to identifying areas of possible improvement in quality and cost-effectiveness; (b) review of the potential for expansion of central, shared or common services; and (c) recommendation of the specific actions to be undertaken, together with the timetable, estimate of resources required and definition of accountability for

their implementation, including the identification of a lead agency or organization, where appropriate.

IV. Priority areas under consideration

24. The discussions held in the Management Ownership Committee and its Task Force have led to the identification of areas to be reviewed as a matter of priority, with a view to strengthening existing common services tools, or to developing new common approaches. Examples of these are provided below.

A. Joint Purchase Service

25. The Management Ownership Committee underscored the need to expand the functions of the Joint Purchase Service to cover additional procurement and services areas. The Service is called upon to work on standardizing a greater number of goods commonly used among participating organizations and agencies in order to group purchases with external contractors. This approach should allow for the strengthening of the negotiating power of the participating organizations and streamline internal procedures, thus resulting in more competitive prices for better services. In this respect, the Task Force has decided to set up a working group on information technology equipment. Bearing in mind the fact that the technical specifications and level of services may greatly vary from one organization to the other, the working group has been requested to develop a pragmatic approach so as to ensure that the equipment retained is acceptable to most users.

B. Banking and travel services

26. Banking and travel arrangements are services that are traditionally outsourced by the various participating organizations. In theses areas, the number of potential contractors is limited. Therefore, the Geneva-based organizations, with the exception of the World Meteorological Organization, use the same bank and travel agent, although the arrangements are not necessarily governed by the same terms and conditions. At the request of the Management Ownership Committee, its Task Force is currently reviewing the possibility of grouping existing contracts with the existing service providers in order to obtain more competitive rates. A working group is being set up to review the banking and travel services and determine a common approach on how best to negotiate the future arrangements.

C. Cleaning services

27. Concerted efforts are deployed to investigate new areas in which common services may be developed. The United Nations Office at Geneva has contacted all Geneva-based organizations within the framework of the Joint Purchase Service, in order to share practice and experience with regard to outsourced commercial cleaning services, prior to launching its next bidding exercise, in late 2001, possibly jointly with one or more organizations of the system. Although it is acknowledged that the technical characteristics of the buildings managed in Geneva may differ significantly, organizations doubtlessly have similar concerns as to the cost and the quality of the services provided, environmental issues and user satisfaction.

D. Provision of electricity

28. Negotiations are taking place with the local electricity provider in order to obtain preferential rates, in the current context of preparations for the opening of the Swiss market to outside competition. The Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, as Chairman of the Management Ownership Committee and Coordinator for Common Services at Geneva, has initiated discussions with the Swiss authorities so as to obtain a favourable interpretation of the host country legislation and, in particular, to ensure that all Geneva-based international organizations are considered one single customer for the purpose of the agreement under consideration.

29. The cases described above are only a few examples of commitment by the heads of the Geneva-based organizations to develop common services in all areas for the benefit of the entire United Nations community. Efforts will continue to foster such arrangements and explore avenues of complementarity in other areas of common interest.

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Report of the Secretary-General*

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II. Cooperation among organizations based at Geneva

2. It is worth recalling that, in spite of the statutory autonomy of each Geneva-based specialized agency and organization, significant collaboration has developed among their executive heads, resulting in increased contacts among counterparts at all levels in the various organizations. The results of those efforts are mentioned below by area of activity and described in a non-exhaustive way. The second part of the report of JIU on common services at Geneva (see A/55/856) examined the most significant manifestations of those efforts, namely, the International Computing Centre, the Joint Medical Service, the Staff Development and Learning Section (then known as the Training and Examinations Section), the Diplomatic Pouch Service and the Joint Purchase Service.

A. Budget and finance

3. Periodic meetings, some of which are organized through the secretariat of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, among senior finance and budget officers are held to discuss matters of common interest, such as projected inflation rates for Geneva, accounting standards, software for electronic payments, credit cards and banking arrangements.

* The footnote requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

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B. Telecommunications

4. Organizations exchange experience in negotiating advantageous telecommunication rates with carriers. As an example, Geneva-based organizations can benefit from the economy of scale created by the telephone network operated by the United Nations Office at Geneva. The International Bureau of Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, located at Geneva, installed a remote partition of the telephone system of the Office on their premises and benefit from all services while keeping their investment to a minimum. The United Nations Office at Geneva has also negotiated the fees for metropolitan links (i.e., optical fibres and leased lines) to interconnect its buildings. Other organizations, such as the United Nations Compensation Commission, the International Trade Centre and the World Health Organization, have decided to join the agreement. The International Labour Organization and the World Trade Organization are currently studying the arrangement in order to establish new links to the Palais des Nations at preferred rates. The United Nations Office at Geneva has just entered into a new contract with four operators for various telecommunication services, such as voice service, worldwide access to the Internet, toll-free numbers, remote local area network (LAN) access and virtual private network features. Other organizations and even field locations may join the aforementioned global contract, allowing better connectivity as well as economies of scale. Efforts are under way to share telephone directory information in compatible phone systems so as to simplify dialling and allow individual caller identification. The United Nations Office at Geneva is currently studying the possible implementation of a global telephony, for which a bidding process will be prepared. The contract envisioned will include the option for other organizations to benefit from the preferential rates obtained. A videoconference bridge has been deployed, with a total capacity of 12 sites simultaneously connected. The bridge is operational and can be accessed by any organization throughout the world, allowing any organization to establish multi-site videoconference sessions over regular connections but also over networks such as the Geneva Diplomatic Community Network (GDCNET). Progress is being made in the development of GDCNET, the facility provided by the International Telecommunication Union which links common system organizations and permanent missions, allowing users to listen to ongoing meeting activities in the conference rooms of other organizations or even to obtain video transmissions over the network. An audioconference service is also available from the telephone system of the United Nations Office at Geneva and can accommodate meetings held away from the Palais des Nations. The United Nations Office at Geneva is able to organize an audio and video webcast on behalf of other organizations. This is being done locally or remotely to respond to the specific needs of the organizations. This service was provided to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in South Africa. The United Nations Office at Geneva is also planning to expand the existing links with the International Computing Centre, allowing for faster throughput of data. This should enable all entities within the Palais campus network infrastructure to use the International Computing Centre's large-scale backup and restore facilities for their mission-critical applications.

C. Information technology

5. Organizations share the data-processing resources of the International Computing Centre and collaborate in its management, through their participation in the Management Committee of the Centre. Licensing agreements negotiated by some organizations for standard computer operating and applications software are made available to the other organizations, as are volume purchase agreements for the acquisition of information technology equipment; this facility is also accorded to permanent missions. Joint seminars have been organized to keep managers abreast of innovations and trends, such as e-commerce and Internet security.

6. Through the implementation of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), the United Nations Office at Geneva provides a computer system designed to address administrative tasks in an integrated framework. The Office has provided training and conversion assistance, and continues to provide support to both departments and organizations which have chosen to use IMIS. The implementation of the payroll module in 2002 will complete the cycle. Payroll services are currently provided using the ICC mainframe; this service will continue to be made

available after 2002 for those departments and organizations that have chosen not to use IMIS.

D. Travel and transportation

7. The United Nations Office at Geneva has traditionally processed travel documents for organizations at Geneva (mainly the United Nations laissez-passer). Experiments have been conducted for the sharing of freight-forwarding contracts, arrangements for the removal and shipment of personal effects and household goods, and joint travel agency contracts. Joint meetings among travel managers are held to exchange information and views as to the future strategy towards changes in the travel agent industry and the air travel market and to explore possibilities for joint negotiations with preferred air carriers for net fare arrangements and volume discounts. The United Nations Office at Geneva has linked up with the Task Force on Common Services working group on travel and transportation and participates in the preparation of requests for proposals pertaining to global arrangements for the removal and shipment of personal effects. The resulting contract will be open for other organizations and specialized agencies to join.

E. Medical services and insurance

8. Organizations collaborate in operating the Joint Medical Service. Several organizations share medical insurance schemes.

F. Security services

9. The United Nations Office at Geneva provides a full range of organized security services to two other agencies. Negotiations have taken place to provide such services under similar modalities to a third organization. The Office also provides ad hoc security support upon request to other agencies. Its Security and Safety Section participates actively in the Inter-Agency Security Network. It has taken the leadership in developing common training and career development programmes for United Nations security officers.

G. Procurement and contracting

10. The Joint Purchase Service at Geneva, whose secretariat is managed by the United Nations Office at Geneva, has existed since 1952. Virtually all specialized agencies located at Geneva are members of the Service, except the International Labour Organization which withdrew in 1998 for cost considerations. Informal contacts with that Organization give reason for the expectation that the agency will again join the Service in the near future. The Service, which has traditionally focused on the joint procurement of paper and office supplies, has recently decided to widen the scope of its activities and to exchange information on major service contracts, such as the cleaning of premises, and to explore possibilities of joint negotiations with the suppliers of such services. It has mandated the United Nations Office at Geneva to negotiate on behalf of its members a contract for electrical power, in anticipation of market deregulation.

11. Volume purchase agreements negotiated by the United Nations Office at Geneva for the supply of stationery and office supplies and for the purchase of personal computers and peripherals have been made available for use by other organizations. Some organizations are starting to include clauses in their general contracting provisions that oblige suppliers to extend the same preferential conditions to other United Nations organizations.

12. Organizations attend on a regular basis the annual meetings of the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group and the meetings of its subgroups. The Working Group actively promotes common approaches to purchasing policies and the enhancement of professionalism in the procurement activities of agencies. This participation also contributes considerably to the exchange of information and to the establishment of professional contacts and cooperative ventures at Geneva.

H. Library and archiving services

13. All Geneva-based organizations have joined the United Nations System Electronic Information Acquisition Consortium that was established in 1998 and is led by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in New York. This consortium makes commercial information products (such as *The Economist* Intelligence Unit,

NewsEdge etc.) available on desktops and in libraries throughout the participating organizations at a fraction of the price of individual paper subscriptions. The International Labour Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization (through the United Nations Bibliographic Information System) have made the catalogues of their libraries available through UNCAPS (the United Nations System Shared Cataloguing and Public Access System), thereby simplifying access to this information by the public and reducing cataloguing time for new acquisitions by allowing participating organizations to retrieve the cataloguing information filed by sister organizations. The United Nations Office at Geneva is planning to contribute to the same project in 2002. The World Health Organization and the International Trade Centre have requested that their libraries be included as well. The International Labour Organization and the United Nations Office at Geneva (as well as several non-Geneva-based organizations) have pooled their information about the location of depository libraries and created a web-based search facility to simplify the process of finding document repositories throughout the world. Efforts are under way to expand the service to include more organizations and all field-based information centres. Projects of a similar nature have been implemented in the area of archiving.

14. Furthermore, the Committee of International Archivists at Geneva, in which representatives from most Geneva-based international organizations take part, was set up and has been working on a common approach to records and archives management, especially in the fields of archival preservation and appraisal. As a first step, efforts focused on training in connection with new technologies. Workshops on the preservation of paper and other materials (e.g., audio-visual, photographs and electronic records), as well as on the appraisal of electronic records, were organized in the biennium 1999-2000.

I. Management of human resources

15. Common system organizations jointly undertake salary and cost-of-living surveys at Geneva. They have worked out a common job classification standard for General Service personnel. A number of training courses, especially in the language area, are provided by the United Nations Office at Geneva and by the International Labour Organization. Some staff-related services are handled by the United Nations Office at Geneva on behalf of other United Nations Secretariat entities, as well as bodies affiliated with the United Nations, in particular those concerning relations with the host country for the provision of Cartes de légitimation, the administration of justice (Joint Appeals Board and Joint Disciplinary Committee) and compensation for work-related accidents (Advisory Board on Compensation Claims). On a more informal basis, the United Nations Office at Geneva and the other organizations at Geneva exchange curricula vitae, seek to assist with spouse employment and, within existing constraints, endeavour to assist when agencies downsize. Any efforts in this respect are made with due consideration given to the various organizational mandates and priorities, such as geographical and gender balance, and career development of staff on board.

J. Management of facilities

16. Under the auspices of the Fondation des immeubles pour les institutions internationales, a number of informal collegial contacts among technical managers of Geneva-based organizations have taken place to exchange information on building efficiency and related techniques. The recent creation, at the initiative of the Senior Project Coordinator, Common Services, of the Office of Central Support Services at United Nations Headquarters, of the inter-agency network of facilities managers, in which some Geneva-based agencies participate, also provides a permanent platform for the exchange of information, a comparison of best practice and other areas of mutual interest.

K. Mail and Diplomatic Pouch services

17. The United Nations Office at Geneva has always operated Diplomatic Pouch services for all Geneva-based organizations. Over the years, on-time performance has been constantly improved, many new Pouch destinations have been created and rates have been negotiated downwards, while the volume of mail transported and received has risen dramatically. The Office also provides mailing services to three other Geneva entities.

L. Conference activities

18. There have been long-standing arrangements for the sharing of conference space and for the rental of large facilities not available at the site of the organizing agency. There has also been consultation on the timing of important meetings in order to avoid unnecessary competition for space and other resources (e.g., interpreters). Agencies have negotiated joint rates for freelance interpreters under the auspices of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The heads of interpretation services meet on a regular basis to exchange views on common areas of concern.

III. Structured approach to common services at Geneva

19. In his comments on the above-mentioned JIU reports (A/54/635 and A/55/856/Add.1), the Secretary-General indicated that action would be taken to establish the Management Ownership Committee at Geneva under the chairmanship of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, regrouping all organizations and agencies of the United Nations common system at Geneva. He indicated that it would be left to the Management Ownership Committee to determine the scope and pace of implementation of arrangements for common services at Geneva, with due regard for the mandates, roles, tasks and rules of each individual organization. The Geneva Management Ownership Committee has been launched accordingly.

20. The Management Ownership Committee is composed of the heads of all Geneva-based specialized agencies, the United Nations Office at Geneva and United Nations programmes, as well as of the World Trade Organization and the International Trade Centre, under the chairmanship of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Committee established a three-tier structure, as follows:

(a) Management Ownership Committee;

(b) Task Force on Common Services;

(c) Technical working groups, each dealing with one or more topics where common services would be desirable.

21. According to its terms of reference, the Committee is to (a) establish and maintain high-level support for and commitment to common services initiatives among organizations of the United Nations system based at Geneva; (b) provide executive direction to its Task Force on Common Services; and (c) review the progress report of the Task Force and take decisions on the related recommendations.

22. The Task Force on Common Services is composed of the heads of administration, or equivalent, of participating organizations and agencies. It continues to be chaired by the former Director of the Division of Administration at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Task Force is responsible for: (a) recommending initiatives or actions which will lead to the establishment of a common service or the reinforcement of an existing one; (b) reviewing proposals and recommendations put forward by the working groups on common services; and (c) defining the degree of commitment of cooperation, participation and human and financial resources required from participating organizations.

23. The working groups are composed of technical representatives and resource persons of each participating organization. The working groups are responsible for: (a) assessment of critical existing central, shared or common services with a view to identifying areas of possible improvement in quality and cost-effectiveness; (b) review of the potential for expansion of central, shared or common services; and (c) recommendation of the specific actions to be taken, together with the timetable, estimate of resources required and definition of accountability for their implementation, including the identification of a lead agency or organization, where appropriate.

IV. Priority areas under consideration

24. The discussions held in the Management Ownership Committee and its Task Force have led to the identification of areas to be reviewed as a matter of priority, with a view to strengthening existing common services tools, or to developing new common approaches. Examples of these are provided below.

A. Joint Purchase Service

25. The Management Ownership Committee underscored the need to expand the functions of the Joint Purchase Service to cover additional procurement

and services areas. The Service is called upon to work on standardizing a greater number of goods commonly used among participating organizations and agencies in order to group purchases with external contractors. This approach should allow for the strengthening of the negotiating power of the participating organizations and streamline internal procedures, thus resulting in more competitive prices for better services. In this respect, the Task Force has decided to set up a working group on information technology equipment. Bearing in mind the fact that the technical specifications and level of services may greatly vary from one organization to the other, the working group has been requested to develop a pragmatic approach so as to ensure that the equipment retained is acceptable to most users.

B. Banking and travel services

26. Banking and travel arrangements are services that are traditionally outsourced by the various participating organizations. In these areas, the number of potential contractors is limited. Therefore, the Geneva-based organizations, with the exception of the World Meteorological Organization, use the same bank and travel agent, although the arrangements are not necessarily governed by the same terms and conditions. At the request of the Management Ownership Committee, its Task Force is currently reviewing the possibility of grouping existing contracts with the existing service providers in order to obtain more competitive rates. A working group is being set up to review the banking and travel services and determine a common approach on how best to negotiate the future arrangements.

C. Cleaning services

27. Concerted efforts are deployed to investigate new areas in which common services may be developed. The United Nations Office at Geneva has contacted all Geneva-based organizations in the context of the Joint Purchase Service, in order to share practice and experiences on commercially outsourced cleaning services, prior to launching its next bidding exercise, in late 2001, possibly jointly with one or more organizations of the system. Although it is acknowledged that the technical characteristics of the buildings managed in Geneva may significantly differ, the organizations and specialized agencies doubtlessly have similar concerns as to the cost and the quality of the services provided, environmental issues and user satisfaction.

D. Provision of electricity

28. Negotiations are taking place with the local electricity provider in order to obtain preferential rates, in the current context of preparations for the opening of the Swiss market to outside competition. The Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, as Chairman of the Management Ownership Committee and Coordinator for Common Services at Geneva, has initiated discussions with the Swiss authorities so as to obtain a favourable interpretation of the host country legislation and, in particular, to ensure that all Geneva-based international organizations are considered one single customer for the purpose of the agreement under consideration.

29. The cases described above are only a few examples of the commitment by the heads of the Geneva-based international organizations and specialized agencies to develop common services in all areas for the benefit of the entire United Nations community. Efforts will continue to be made to foster such arrangements and explore avenues of complementarity in other areas of common interest.

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Work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held its thirty-sixth session in New York from 31 January to 2 February 2001 and its thirty-seventh session in Geneva from 25 to 27 July 2001.

At its thirty-sixth session, the Board focused its deliberations on four key issues: the "revolution in military affairs", the illicit trade in small arms, reducing nuclear danger and non-proliferation regimes. At its thirty-seventh session, the Board continued its deliberations on the revolution in military affairs and reducing nuclear danger, and also addressed nuclear-weapon-free zones as instruments of disarmament.

The members agreed that there existed "a crisis of multilateral disarmament diplomacy" and that the United Nations had important roles to play in addressing the crisis, including through public education, especially with respect to nuclear disarmament. The Board also agreed that: (a) the revolution in military affairs had profound implications — both positive and negative — for the future of global non-proliferation and disarmament regimes and would require further attention by the Board; (b) the proposal contained in the Millennium Declaration (see General Assembly resolution 55/2) for convening a major international conference on eliminating nuclear dangers would best be pursued through an incremental process given the current lack of a global consensus to convene such a conference; (c) disarmament and non-proliferation regimes were inseparable and mutually dependent upon their wider international strategic environment; (d) disarmament and non-proliferation education offered a valuable means of combating public apathy and complacency about disarmament and non-proliferation issues; and (e) it was important to adhere to the guidelines of the United Nations Disarmament

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Commission in the creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones and that such zones were a valuable contribution to international peace and security.

In response to General Assembly resolution 55/33 N of 20 November 2000, the Board forwarded to the Secretary-General inputs on information with regard to specific measures that could significantly reduce the risk of nuclear war, suggesting specific measures to reduce nuclear danger. A summary of that discussion is contained in a separate report to the Assembly (A/56/400).

In its capacity as Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the Board approved for submission to the Assembly the report of the Director of the Institute on its activities from July 2000 to July 2001 and the programme of work and budget for 2001 (see A/56/359).

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held its thirty-sixth session in New York from 31 January to 2 February 2001 and its thirty-seventh session in Geneva from 25 to 27 July 2001 (see annex for the membership of the Board). The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/183 O of 20 December 1983. The report of the Board on its work as Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) is contained in a separate document (A/56/359). The inputs of the Board in response to the request made in Assembly resolution 55/33 N of 20 November 2000 on reducing nuclear danger are contained in a separate report of the Secretary-General (A/56/400).

2. Nabil Fahmy, Ambassador of Egypt to the United States of America, chaired the two sessions of the Board in 2001.

3. The present report summarizes the Board's deliberations during the two sessions and the specific recommendations it conveyed to the Secretary-General.

A. General agreement

4. The Board agreed that there currently existed a crisis of multilateral disarmament diplomacy. The Board encouraged the Secretary-General to raise this issue with Member States in all appropriate forums and stressed that the fundamental responsibility for alleviating this crisis remained with the Member States. The Secretary-General could not be expected to resolve this crisis independent of concrete actions from the Member States and sustained efforts from civil society.

5. Recognizing the global implications of disarmament for international peace and security, the Board agreed that the United Nations system must play an active role in promoting disarmament. The Secretary-General's efforts to enhance the capabilities and effectiveness of United Nations organs for disarmament and international peace and security merited the support of all Member States. The Board also supported the efforts of the Secretary-General to rouse public opinion about the importance of achieving disarmament objectives, in particular nuclear disarmament, and strongly encouraged him to continue those efforts as one important means of addressing the present crisis of multilateral disarmament diplomacy.

B. Weapons of mass destruction

6. At both of its 2001 sessions, the Board focused closely on a number of issues concerning threats from weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical and biological weapons) and their implications for the disarmament activities of the United Nations and existing multilateral regimes. Three specific issues appeared on the Board's agendas for those sessions: reducing nuclear danger, non-proliferation regimes and nuclear-weapon-free zones.

7. The Board's deliberations on reducing nuclear danger focused on the search for practical means of implementing the proposal contained in the Millennium Declaration (see resolution 55/2) to hold an international conference on eliminating nuclear dangers. While the Board supported the goal of convening such a conference, it recognized that the international consensus needed to achieve such a goal had not yet materialized. Much of the Board's deliberations thus focused on the relative advantages of alternative incremental steps to promote consensus-building on the need for such a conference, which are described further in section D below.

8. At its thirty-sixth session, the Board considered discussion papers prepared and presented by Hu Xiaodi and William Potter on non-proliferation regimes. The Board agreed that non-proliferation regimes — international arrangements for the control or elimination of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles — were profoundly dependent upon the wider international strategic environment. They also agreed that non-proliferation and disarmament were inseparable issues and that non-proliferation efforts alone would not suffice without demonstrable progress in achieving disarmament commitments. They further agreed that disarmament education was valuable in combating widespread public apathy and complacency, particularly with respect to global nuclear threats. There was less agreement over the extent to which the various weapon regimes should coordinate their activities or the extent to which they were discriminatory. The Board agreed to focus more specifically on nuclear-weapon-free zones at its thirty-seventh session.

C. Nuclear-weapon-free zones

9. At its thirty-seventh session, Nugroho Wisnumurti and Abdul Minty prepared and presented discussion papers on the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The Board agreed that while such zones, taken alone, offered no panacea for the problem of global nuclear disarmament, they advanced that goal by helping to reduce the threats posed by the very existence of nuclear weapons and to advance the incremental process of norm-building. The Board viewed such zones as having wide support in the world community. Given their regional nature, the Board shared the view of the United Nations Disarmament Commission[1] that such zones must be established on the basis of the free will of the parties to the specific regional nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaty. Almost all the members of the Board agreed that such zones continued to play a vital role in disarmament, that they would remain important in the future and, recalling the past contributions of previous Secretaries-General in creating such zones, that the efforts of the United Nations, specifically the Department for Disarmament Affairs, to support the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones merited the support of all Member States.

10. While recognizing the regional nature of nuclear-weapon-free zones, the Board also acknowledged that the prospective parties to new zones could benefit from assistance provided by the United Nations, including the good offices of the Secretary-General in accordance with the principles set forth in the United Nations Disarmament Commission guidelines, in promoting the creation of new zones, in helping to strengthen existing zones and in promoting respect for such zones throughout the world community. The Board agreed on the need for strong support for nuclear-weapon-free zones among the nuclear-weapon States.

11. Efforts are needed throughout the world community to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts that motivate countries to seek nuclear arms, a goal that could be served by "track II" diplomacy and confidence-building measures. The Board also underscored the importance of legally binding negative security assurances.

D. General Assembly resolution 55/33 N on reducing nuclear danger

12. In its resolution 55/33 N, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to seek inputs from the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters on information with regard to specific measures that would significantly reduce the risk of nuclear war, including the proposal contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration to convene an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. This request followed the issuance of a note by the Secretary-General transmitting a summary of the discussion of the Advisory Board on specific measures that would significantly reduce the risk of nuclear war, along with papers prepared by three Board members: Harald Müller, Guillermo González and Arundhati Ghose (A/55/324).

13. At its thirty-sixth session, the Board's deliberations commenced with three discussion papers presented by Mr. Müller, Ms. Ghose and Boris Pyadyshev (A/56/400, annex I). Those papers and the discussion that followed addressed the following specific measures to reduce nuclear danger: deep reductions, de-alerting and a variety of confidence-building measures among States with large nuclear arsenals; de-alerting and enhanced transparency in States with smaller nuclear arsenals; efforts by nuclear possessors to assist in defusing regional disputes; controls against unauthorized or accidental use; an emphasis at the United Nations on the principle of accountability for progress in disarmament; a review of nuclear doctrines; the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons; cultivation of a norm against the use of nuclear weapons; preparatory work on an international conference on reducing nuclear danger; high-level meetings of the Security Council on disarmament issues; a ban on the use of weapons-usable nuclear materials for peaceful purposes; and annual prizes for news media reporting on disarmament issues.

14. The Board continued its deliberations on this issue at its thirty-seventh session, where it considered discussion papers prepared by Maleeha Lodhi and Mr. Müller (A/56/400, annex II). Those papers echoed and elaborated upon points raised during the earlier sessions and raised some additional issues, including the inclusion of health and environmental damage

resulting from the testing, production, operation and maintenance of nuclear weapons; the significant limitations of missile defence as a means of eliminating nuclear dangers relative to the security gained from global nuclear disarmament; the need for greater attention to the verification of disarmament commitments and the development of measures to deal with violations thereof; the need for an emphasis on public education; the need for multilateral efforts to advance cooperative security rather than the unilateral interests of individual States; controls against the development of new generations of nuclear weapons; controls against regional imbalances of conventional forces; and improvements over the command and control of nuclear forces. Members of the Board were also invited to attend a briefing organized by UNIDIR on de-alerting, featuring a visiting expert from Princeton University, Harold Feiveson.

15. The Board concluded its thirty-seventh session with recommendations on seven measures to reduce nuclear danger: (a) promotion of a regional and global dialogue on cooperative security as an important means of advancing disarmament objectives while reducing and de-emphasizing the perceived security benefits of possessing nuclear weapons; (b) political and technical preparations for an international conference on eliminating nuclear dangers; (c) de-alerting of nuclear weapons as part of a broader effort at threat reduction; (d) review of nuclear doctrines; (e) the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons; (f) measures to promote transparency at the global and regional levels as a means of enhancing international peace and security; and (g) programmes of education and training on the dangers of nuclear weapons (see also A/56/400). The Board encouraged the Secretary-General to urge Member States to move forward in these specific areas.

E. Small arms in the light of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

16. The Board addressed small arms issues at its thirty-sixth session, which preceded the convening in July 2001 of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Board considered discussion papers prepared and presented by Rolf Ekeus and Yoshitomo Tanaka as well as Rokiatou Keita. While the members were in full agreement on the importance of the conference, many urged the Board to alert the Secretary-General to growing international security concerns over threats from weapons that initially were legally produced or exported but that were later diverted for illicit use. Many members also stressed the positive contributions that non-governmental groups could make in helping to curb the illicit trade in small arms. As discussed further in section I below, the Board met with representatives of two such groups, which urged various measures to expand the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the deliberations at the United Nations on small arms issues.

17. At its thirty-seventh session, the Board viewed a United Nations film documentary entitled "Armed to the Teeth", concerning the national and global security challenges posed by the illicit trade in small arms. The film was produced by the Department of Public Information in cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs.[2]

F. Revolution in military affairs and its effect on disarmament and arms limitation

18. The Board considered "the revolution in military affairs" extensively at both of its 2001 sessions. Though the term has many definitions, the Board accepted an interpretation offered by Harald Müller stressing three dimensions of the revolution: as a way of thinking about modern armed conflict and arms control; as a matter of the technical capabilities of weapon-enabling systems (e.g., sensors, data-processing capabilities, etc.); and as an issue addressing unique characteristics of new and emerging conventional weapons per se.

19. The Board was briefed during its thirty-sixth session by three experts on the revolution in military affairs, namely, Michael Clarke (Kings College), Michael O'Hanlon (the Brookings Institution) and Ahmed Hashim (Search for Common Ground). At its thirty-seventh session, the Board focused specifically on the outer-space aspects of the revolution in military affairs. The Board considered three discussion papers on this subject prepared and presented by Mr. Hu, Raimundo González and Shai Feldman. For additional specialized expertise on this issue, the members

engaged in a teleconference with three leading American and Russian authorities on the subject: Admiral William Owens (Teledesic LLC), Major General Vladimir Slipchenko (retired) and Sergey Oznobishchev (Institute for Strategic Assessments).

20. The Board agreed that the revolution in military affairs may have some positive value for disarmament and arms control in improving transparency, building confidence, promoting verification, deterring future wars, limiting civilian casualties, reducing obsolete arms, reducing defence budgets, assisting peacekeeping efforts, enforcing peace settlements and speeding the obsolescence of nuclear weapons. The Board also recognized that the revolution posed many potential dangers as well, including increasing the frequency of wars, shifting the focus of military attacks to targets relating to economic infrastructure rather than military forces per se, increasing the lethality of weapons systems, promoting a dangerous action-reaction spiral (arms races, asymmetric responses, terrorism, cyberterrorism, etc.) and requiring expensive new investments in military technology and production. The Board agreed that the central challenge of the revolution in military affairs for future disarmament efforts was how to take advantage of the positive features of the revolution while eliminating or minimizing the risks.

21. The briefings and background reading materials presented the Board with several possible means of reducing the danger of the revolution in military affairs.[3] Examples included working for a ban on high-precision weapons of intercontinental range, prohibiting the use of conventional missiles in strategic submarines, exploring new treaties for "sixth-generation" weapons, banning outer-space weapons, protecting civilian satellites, protecting civilians in war, strengthening the emphasis on diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of disputes (rather than new weapons), considering more closely the regional aspects of the revolution in military affairs, addressing the non-space aspects of the revolution, focusing more on weapons and weapon infrastructures and exploring the implications of the revolution for peacekeeping.

22. The Board recognized the revolution in military affairs as a complicated issue and agreed that further consultations would be required at its next session that might continue even in the inter-sessional period. The Board encouraged further study of this issue because of its profound and multifaceted implications for all countries and also because of the revolution's potential applications for the United Nations in areas other than disarmament, especially in peacekeeping, the peaceful settlement of regional disputes and so on. The Board was not yet prepared, however, to make substantive recommendations on the issue.

G. Outer space

23. The Board is increasingly concerned about the prospect of the weaponization of outer space and its repercussions for international peace and security, including the future of nuclear disarmament. At its thirty-seventh session, the Board considered specifically the outer-space aspects of the revolution in military affairs (see previous section).

24. The Board supports the prohibition of the weaponization of outer space and encourages the Secretary-General to assign this issue a high priority. The Board specifically urged the Secretary-General to stress the legal issues pertaining to the weaponization of outer space, in particular the implications of such a development for the Outer Space Treaty (resolution 2222 (XXI), annex) and future efforts to prohibit all forms of weaponry in outer space.

25. The Board recognizes the need to treat the weaponization of outer space as separate from but related to the issue of the revolution in military affairs. The weaponization of outer space is a danger that merits special focus, even independent of the revolution, while the revolution has special (e.g. regional) aspects that are independent of outer space.

26. The Board recognizes the need for greater institutional coordination in the United Nations system between offices that deal with outer space issues and those that deal with disarmament.

27. The Board will consider the issue at its next session.

H. Education for disarmament and non-proliferation

28. During its deliberations in 2000, the Board focused specifically on the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation education and recommended that the Secretary-General call the attention of Member States to this issue with respect to all levels of education,

from primary to higher education. The Board had specifically voiced its concern over the extent of public complacency over nuclear weapons issues today and viewed education as a useful means of addressing that problem.

29. Following the Board's recommendation, the General Assembly, on 20 November 2000, adopted resolution 55/33 E, entitled "United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education", in which it requested the Secretary-General to prepare, with the assistance of a group of qualified governmental experts, a study on disarmament and non-proliferation education. The resolution further provided that the group of experts should invite representatives of organizations of the United Nations system with special competence in disarmament or education or both to participate in its work, and should also invite university educators, disarmament and peace-related institutes and non-governmental organizations that had special qualifications in education and training or in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation to make written and oral presentations to it.

30. The Board heard briefings from two of its members who are participating in the education study, Mr. Potter and Miguel Marín Bosch, who chairs the group of experts undertaking the study. As at September 2001, the study group had completed two sessions of work. In resolution 55/33 E, the Secretary-General was requested to submit his report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

I. Civil society

31. The Board heard presentations from representatives of several non-governmental organizations during both of its 2001 sessions. At its thirty-sixth session, the Board was briefed by David Jackman (International Action Network on Small Arms and the Quaker United Nations office) and Michael Klare (Hampshire College). Both urged specific measures to expand NGO participation at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in July 2001. At its thirty-seventh session, the Board heard presentations by David Atwood (President of the NGO Committee on Disarmament in Geneva), Felicity Hill (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom), and Peter Batchelor (Small Arms Survey). Mr. Atwood cautioned against any presumption that there was such a thing as the NGO "disarmament community", which clearly there was not. Ms. Hill referred to the Secretary-General's efforts to forge a "Global Compact" with the business community to promote global values, and challenged the Board to consider possible ways of promoting such values within the defence industrial sector. In discussing the annual yearbook, *Small Arms Survey*, Mr. Batchelor stressed the vital importance of impartial public information on all aspects of small arms and described his project's efforts to promote that goal.

32. The Board supports efforts in the United Nations system to facilitate NGO access to people and information about disarmament matters, to promote public education projects on disarmament and non-proliferation and to explore ways and means of engaging the defence industry in a dialogue — possibly in the context of the United Nations Global Compact — on the civic responsibilities of that industry.

II. Board of Trustees of the Institute

33. At the winter session, the Director of UNIDIR gave the Board, in its capacity as the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR, an interim update of the Institute's programme of work and adjusted budget estimates for the year 2001.

34. At its summer session, the Director of UNIDIR informed the Board that a subvention, used to cover the costs of the Director and administration, was necessary for the coming biennium. Such a subvention was important not only economically, but also to ensure the independence of the Institute. It was important to note that, for several years, the subvention had not been adjusted for inflation, while the salaries had been. In the period 1996-1997, the subvention was reduced from $220,000 to $213,000. The Director urged that the matter be taken up with some urgency as part of the effort to ensure the independence of UNIDIR and to facilitate growth in voluntary income. Efforts to ensure that it was increased to an adequate level and adjusted for inflation should be undertaken with increased vigour. Members of the Board took note of the Director's counsel and identified some possible approaches to addressing this issue.

35. At its summer session, pursuant to article III, paragraph 2 (b), of the statute of the Institute, the Board approved, for submission to the General Assembly, the programme of work and budget of the Institute for 2002 (A/56/359).

III. Disarmament information programme

36. The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Jayantha Dhanapala, briefed the Board at its thirty-sixth session on the activities of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme. The Board also discussed related activities of the programme at its thirty-seventh session, with particular reference to the importance of education in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation. Throughout its deliberations, the Board stressed the importance of providing strong support for disarmament in civil society and recognized the extent that such support depended upon the availability of timely and reliable information about progress in all areas of disarmament.

IV. Future work

37. The Board proposed to include the following items in its future work:

(a) Continuation of the discussion of specific measures that would significantly reduce the risk of nuclear war, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/54 K of 1 December 1999, particularly in regional contexts;

(b) Continuation of the discussion on the revolution in military affairs and its effect on disarmament and arms limitation, particularly in regional contexts;

(c) Outer space issues, particularly preventing the weaponization of outer space;

(d) Review of the third mandated function of the Board, namely, to advise the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme.

38. Other topics that could be considered are:

(a) Conventional disarmament;

(b) Cultures of violence;

(c) Small arms and light weapons;

(d) The threat of missile proliferation and the impact of missile defences, and related agreements and treaties;

(e) Challenges to multilateral approaches to disarmament;

(f) Biological weapons.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 42* (A/54/42), annex I.

[2] In June 2001, the film won the first-place "Gold Camera Award" at the International Film and Video Festival in Chicago, United States of America.

[3] A bibliography of materials on all subjects considered by the Advisory Board may be found on the Board's web site: http://www.un.org/Depts/dda/AdvisoryBoard/ which is maintained by the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

Annex

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Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 25
United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations

Letter dated 27 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to General Assembly resolutions 53/22, 54/111 and 55/23 on the "United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations", I take pleasure in enclosing a document entitled "Salzburg Reflections". The document emanated from the "Salzburg Dialogue among Civilizations: A New Paradigm of International Relations", which took place in Schloss Fuschl near Salzburg, Austria, on 28 August 2001 (see annex).

I would greatly appreciate if you would arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 25.

(*Signed*) Gerhard **Pfanzelter**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations

01-55659 (E) 011001

Annex to the letter dated 27 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Salzburg Reflections

Salzburg Dialogue among Civilizations (28 August 2001)

The Salzburg Dialogue among Civilizations was convened in the framework of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, bringing together participants from various regions and backgrounds to discuss the potential of the Dialogue among Civilizations as a new paradigm of international relations. The results of these discussions will feed into the ongoing work of the United Nations on this subject, which will culminate in a special session of the General Assembly on 3 and 4 December 2001.

The following are some of the reflections which emanate from the discussions:

As the reality of a more interdependent world is pushing us ever closer together, we will have to improve our management of diversity.

Science, technology, communication, migration, trade, finance and disease are becoming increasingly borderless, affecting our societies in an unprecedented manner. Yet, culture and religion are re-emerging as major driving forces in the political set-up of our world.

Globalization and localization are two sides of the same coin, but it may need dialogue to avoid confrontation between the two. Dialogue necessitates a change of mindset, which has to be based on trust. Civilizations are anchored in a common set of values we all share and in our common aspiration for peace, justice, partnership and truth.

The most practical way to create trust is "to build together" across the divide. We recognize a growing fatigue with human conflict and violence, therefore we are witnessing a common yearning for human solidarity. Much has been accomplished by the existing international institutions, yet much more has to be done.

The new heroes of this dialogue will be different from our heroes of the past. They will be those who stand ready to extend their hand, to listen to the other, to take advantage of the commonality that unites us, and to expand our faith in our common humanity.

What we can pass on to the next generations is therefore a willingness to learn from each other instead of a fear of diversity. Future generations will bear witness to the realization of a successful policy of dialogue and reap the fruits. It is our responsibility to sow the seeds.

The call for a dialogue among civilizations comes from those who want to meet this challenge aimed at governance through inclusion.

"War begins in the mind of those who perceive diversity as a threat" (John Hume). "Peace begins in the mind of those who perceive diversity as an element of betterment and growth" (Kofi Annan).

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Fifty-sixth session
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United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

Report of the Secretary-General*

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/128 of 8 December 2000 on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues.

2. On 20 July 2001, the Secretary-General drew the attention of the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations to resolutions 55/123 to 55/129 of 8 December 2000, with the request that the Permanent Representative inform him, by 7 September 2001, of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolutions.

3. On 27 July 2001, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to all other Member States drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of resolutions 55/123 to 55/129, in particular to paragraph 5 of resolution 55/128, and requesting information, by 7 September 2001, concerning any action taken or envisaged in relation to their implementation.

4. A reply dated 17 September 2001 was received from Israel, covering various aspects of resolutions 55/123 to 55/129. The text reads as follows:

> "Israel's position on these resolutions has been set forth in successive annual replies submitted to the Secretary-General in recent years, the latest of which being Israel's note verbale of 6 September 2000. Israel regrets the fact that the resolutions regarding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) remain rife with political issues irrelevant to the work for which UNRWA is responsible and thus remain detached from the reality in the area. Accordingly, Israel abstained on resolution 55/126 and voted against resolutions 55/123, 55/125, 55/127, 55/128 and 55/129.
>
> "The resolutions concerning UNRWA should respect the terms of reference of the peace process, which call for the resolution of all outstanding

* The footnote requested by General Assembly resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

01-55696 (E) 051001

issues through bilateral negotiations. In light of the present difficulties in the region and the continued acts of violence and terrorism, it is especially important now that the agreed terms of the peace process receive encouragement and support from concerned parties in the region and the international community, including through the resolutions regarding the functioning of UNRWA.

"Israel believes that UNRWA can play an important role in promoting the social and economic advancement foreseen in the agreements between Israel and the Palestinians, within the limits of its humanitarian mandate, and accordingly looks forward to continuing the cooperation and good working relationship with UNRWA.

"In light of the above, Israel considers it essential that the General Assembly consolidate the resolutions regarding UNRWA into one resolution directly related to the Agency's humanitarian tasks and refrain from including elements that threaten to prejudge issues that are subject to negotiations between the parties. This would also be compatible with the necessity to rationalize the work of the General Assembly."

5. No replies have been received from other Member States with regard to paragraph 5 of resolution 55/128.

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Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 87
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds" for Palestine refugees

Report of the Secretary-General*

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 55/129 of 8 December 2000, the twenty-first resolution adopted since its first consideration of the subject of its thirty-fifth session (resolution 35/13 B of 3 November 1980).

2. The Secretary-General has submitted 19 reports (the most recent being A/55/425) on the steps he has taken in pursuance of those resolutions, including his efforts to prepare the functional feasibility study on establishing the proposed university that was first requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 36/146 G of 16 December 1981. The position of the Government of Israel with regard to the establishment of the university is also set out in those reports.

3. As the Secretary-General has previously indicated (see A/41/457, para. 4), he believes that, in order to comply with the request addressed to him by the General Assembly, it would be necessary to complete the functional feasibility study initiated in pursuance of previous Assembly resolutions. To that end, the Secretary-General again sought the assistance of the Rector of the United Nations University, who, at his request, made available a highly qualified expert, Mihaly Simai, to assist in the preparation of the study. The expert was to visit the area and meet with the relevant Israeli officials, bearing in mind that Israel exercises effective authority in the area concerned.

4. In a note verbale dated 18 July 2001 addressed to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, the Secretary-General, with reference to the request addressed to him by the General Assembly, requested that the Government of Israel facilitate the visit of the expert, which would take place at a mutually convenient date. Recalling the position taken by the Government of Israel concerning the proposed university, as well as the clarifications already given by the

* The footnote requested by General Assembly resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

01-55690 (E) 041001

Secretariat to the questions raised by the Israeli authorities (see A/36/593, annex), the Secretary-General expressed the view that such questions could best be discussed on the occasion of the visit of the United Nations expert.

5. On 17 September 2001, the Permanent Representative of Israel sent the following reply to the Secretary-General:

> "Israel has voted consistently against this resolution and its position remains unchanged. It is clear that the sponsors of this resolution seek to exploit the field of higher education for political purposes totally extraneous to genuine academic pursuits. Accordingly, the Government of Israel is of the opinion that the proposed visit of Dr. Mihaly Simai to Israel would serve no useful purpose."

6. In view of the position taken by the Government of Israel, it has not been possible to complete the functional feasibility study on the proposed university at Jerusalem as planned.

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Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 29
Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Letter from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly

In my report to the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, I called the attention of world leaders to the urgency of addressing the problem of unemployment and underemployment of young people. I furthermore committed myself to convening, together with the heads of the World Bank and the International Labour Organization, a high-level policy network on youth employment — drawing on the most creative leaders in private industry, civil society and economic policy to explore imaginative approaches to this difficult challenge (A/54/2000, paras. 106-111). Heads of State and Government meeting at the Millennium Summit took up this challenge when, in the Millennium Declaration, they resolved to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work" (General Assembly resolution 55/2, para. 20).

In collaboration with the International Labour Organization and the World Bank, I formed the Youth Employment Network and appointed as part of this Network a high-level panel to prepare a set of policy recommendations. The members of the High-level Panel are: Saifuddin Abdullah, César Alierta, Ruth C. L. Cardoso, Hernando de Soto, Geeta Rao Gupta, Bill Jordan, Allan Larsson, Rick Little, Maria Livanos Cattaui, Magatte Wade, Ralph Willis and Rosanna Wong.

I am now pleased to transmit to you the recommendations of the Youth Employment Network and its High-level Panel. These recommendations provide the international community with an important impetus to mobilize political commitment and practical action to rapidly increase employment opportunities for youth. I should be grateful if you would bring these recommendations to the attention of Member States.

As recommended by the Panel, I encourage Member States to draw up national action plans on youth employment as a matter of priority. I also invite the International Labour Organization to take the lead in supporting the implementation of these recommendations. I have requested the High-level Panel to continue to act in an advisory capacity to me on the issue of youth employment. I will report on progress within the overall framework of the follow-up to the Millennium Summit.

01-55761 (E) 171001

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the members of the Panel for the effort that they brought to their task and to James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, and Juan Somavía, Director-General of the International Labour Organization, for their partnership in this endeavour.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

Recommendations of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network

I. A global alliance for youth employment

A. Introduction

1. The Secretary-General, in his report to the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, stated:

> *Together with the heads of the World Bank and the International Labour Organization, I am convening a high-level policy network on youth employment — drawing on the most creative leaders in private industry, civil society and economic policy to explore imaginative approaches to this difficult challenge. I will ask this policy network to propose a set of recommendations that I can convey to world leaders within a year. The possible sources of solutions will include the Internet and the informal sector, especially the contribution that small enterprises can make to employment generation.*

2. Twelve eminent persons were invited to become members of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network and, acting in an advisory capacity, to provide their views and experience on how to best address youth employment issues. In addition to the high-level panellists, the Network involves a number of technical partners that play an active role in promoting productive and decent work for young women and men and whose knowledge and experience can enrich the work of the Network.

3. The recommendations set out herein are the result of consultations and deliberations among the members of the High-level Panel, taking into consideration the views of a wide range of technical members, youth organizations and those of the secretariat of the Network, composed of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

B. A new approach, a new political commitment and a new partnership for full employment

4. The recommendations are based on a new approach, the new political commitment given at the Millennium Summit, and a new partnership between national Governments and global organizations for full employment:

(i) First, young people are an asset in building a better world today, not a problem. In the next 10 years 1.2 billion young women and men will enter into the working age population, the best educated and trained generation of young people ever, a great potential for economic and social development;

(ii) Second, heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit gave a firm political commitment to developing and implementing strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work;

(iii) Third, there is great potential for improving the employment situation through the integration of public policies for young women and men in overall employment policies and by making full employment an overarching goal for global economic and social strategies and for national policies.

1. A new approach: young people are an asset, not a problem

5. There are more than 1 billion young women and men in the world today, the majority of whom live in developing countries. Across the globe, they are making important contributions as innovators, entrepreneurs, productive workers, consumers, citizens and members of civil society. They are at the forefront of the information and communication technologies revolution. They are artists and athletes. Their culture enriches our societies and can be a force for positive change in cultural values. In short, young people are an asset, invaluable partners for economic and social development, bringing creativity, enthusiasm and leadership to the table.

6. Rapid globalization and fast-paced technological developments have already offered many young women and men unprecedented opportunities for

education, innovation and productive, rewarding work. Those young people entering the work force form a new generation with great capacity, the best educated and trained generation of young women and men ever.

7. For millions of others, however, globalization and technological change have created uncertainty and insecurity by exacerbating their already vulnerable situations, widening the gap between young entrants into the labour force and experienced workers, between those young women and men with well-paid and productive work and those with low wages and poor quality jobs. Many young people are failing to gain a firm foothold in the labour market. They are ending up with no job at all, working fewer hours than they would wish or else working in low-paid, dead-end jobs, mainly in the informal sector, with little protection, security or effective voice, and no real prospects for the future. Their individual experiences are further influenced by factors such as gender, ethnicity, geographical location and the state of development of the countries in which they live. However, statistics, sobering as they are, reveal little of the heavy toll that unemployment and underemployment take on young women and men, their families and communities through economic hardship, human suffering, social exclusion, lost production and wasted human potential. Not surprisingly, there is a sense of frustration and hopelessness among those who feel left behind by the knowledge economy and the network society.

8. Young people are now asking that their voices be heard, that issues affecting them be addressed and that their roles be recognized. Rather than being viewed as a target group for which employment must be found, they want to be accepted as partners for development, helping to chart a common course and shaping the future for everyone. Over the next 10 years, their number will reach almost 1.2 billion, the relative declines in the youth population of industrialized and transitional countries being more than offset by the increases in developing regions, where the majority of young people will continue to live. The expected inflow of young people into the labour market, rather than being viewed as a problem, should be recognized as presenting an enormous opportunity and potential for economic and social development.

9. **We, members of the Secretary-General's Panel, recommend that the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization invite the youth of the world to build a strong alliance:**

- **to get young people recognized as an asset for economic and social development;**
- **to create an understanding that young people are a diverse group with various needs based on factors such as gender, ethnicity, geographical location and the economic development of the countries in which they live;**
- **to advocate more inclusive employment policies to fully utilize the potential of all young people.**

2. A new political commitment: decent and productive work for young people everywhere

10. The challenge for all societies is to generate sufficient opportunities for all young people to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity, a working life that makes full use of their talents, abilities and aspirations. This challenge is enormous. Heads of State and Government took an important step in mobilizing international action at the Millennium Summit by resolving to develop and implement strategies that give young women and men everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work. They made this commitment on behalf of their Governments. The time has now come for national Governments to translate the political commitments of the national leaders into public policies, at the global and national levels, policies to make the next generation of young people the first "decent work generation". The first step is to mobilize all national and local actors to be part of the commitment.

11. **We, members of the Secretary-General's Panel, recommend that the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization invite all heads of State and Government to mobilize national and local actors to review, rethink and reorient past policies and implement new policies to fulfil the commitment to decent work for young people, made at the Millennium Summit.**

3. A new partnership: a global strategy, national action plans

12. The next step is to embark upon a new way of making policy, based on a clear recognition of the different responsibilities and roles of the United Nations system, national Governments, employers, trade unions and civil society for employment policies.

13. The United Nations, the World Bank and ILO will contribute by offering well-coordinated global strategies with employment as the overarching goal. ILO has taken the lead in preparing a New Global Agenda for Employment, which will form the basis for strategic alliances between the United Nations organizations and the Bretton Woods institutions. The New Global Agenda responds to the call of the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth special session, entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world" for ILO to develop a "coherent and coordinated international strategy on employment". The alliance between the United Nations, the World Bank and ILO on the youth employment initiative is serving as a model for initiatives in other fields. The whole international community will be engaged and provide vision and leadership in addressing this truly global problem. In this way the international community will also help to integrate youth employment as an important dimension in major forthcoming international events, including preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio + 10), where economic and social, as well as environmental sustainability will be a central concern.

14. Strategies can be shaped on a global level, but policies and action plans have to be developed at the national level. Here, government leadership is fundamental. A critical and self-critical review of past national policies is essential in the preparation of national action plans. A willingness to learn from more successful countries is another element. Equally important, policies and programmes should be based not only on the needs of young people but also on the strengths that they bring to businesses, communities and societies. For this to happen perceptions about young people need to change. Furthermore, Governments need to consider an integrated concept for employment policy. Employment policy is not a sectoral policy among others; it is rather the successful mobilization of all public policies with the aim of getting people into full and productive employment.

15. While government leadership is critical, Governments cannot do it alone. Business also has a substantial interest in making the most of youth potential, and in avoiding the negative consequences of widespread youth unemployment. Employers recognize that employing young people is good for business, as they bring to the workplace enthusiasm, energy, commitment, new ideas and the willingness to embrace change. There is also a role for networks and partnerships among Governments, at the national and local levels, employers' organizations, trade unions, youth organizations and other civil society groups: they can learn from each other and pool efforts and resources.

16. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work provides a basic set of principles that, when adhered to, will help to provide decent work for young people.

17. **We, members of the Secretary-General's Panel, recommend that the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization develop a new partnership between their organizations and national Governments in catalysing action for youth employment, where strategies are developed at a global level, while policies and action plans are developed at a national level.**

Civil society, the business community, employers, trade unions and youth organizations should also be invited to contribute to policy-making and implementation at both global and national levels.

C. Four top priorities for all national action plans: employability, equal opportunities for young men and young women, entrepreneurship and employment creation

18. There are many paths to success. However, across a variety of countries and different levels of economic and social development, a few common elements should be regarded as top priorities in every national action plan:

- Employability: invest in education and vocational training for young people, and improve the impact of those investments;

- Equal opportunities: give young women the same opportunities as young men;
- Entrepreneurship: make it easier to start and run enterprises to provide more and better jobs for young women and men;
- Employment creation: place employment creation at the centre of macroeconomic policy.

19. Information and communication technologies offer significant potential for welfare enhancement and employment generation among young people, and their impact on each of the priority elements should be fully considered in every action plan. Here, emphasis must be placed on closing the digital divide within and between countries.

1. Employability

20. In the world today, there are too many people lacking the necessary education and relevant training for good, productive jobs and there are too many unproductive jobs with poor remuneration. Education begins with literacy and, in spite of vast improvements, there is still a huge literacy gap. In many countries, training remains largely unrelated to labour market needs. Young people often lack access to the labour market services and support needed to help them secure decent and productive work. It is time to break the vicious circle of poor education and training, poor jobs and poverty. All countries need to review, rethink and reorient their education, vocational training and labour market policies to facilitate the school-to-work transition and to give young people — particularly those who are disadvantaged because of disabilities or who face discrimination because of race, religion or ethnicity — a head start in working life. Each country should set objectives and targets based on best practice/best performance for investment in education and training and other employability strengthening measures, leading to jobs and social justice for the young.

2. Equal opportunities for young women and young men

21. In many countries, where boys and girls have equal access to education, girls are doing better than boys at school. In a great many countries girls are not getting the same education opportunities as boys, with serious gender gaps in literacy as a consequence. Regardless of these differences in education systems, young women have in general greater difficulties than young men in entering — and staying in — the world of work, because of discriminatory policies, structural barriers and cultural prejudices. All countries need to review, rethink and reorient their policies to ensure that there are equal opportunities for young women when they enter the workforce and throughout their working lives. Each country should set objectives and targets to rectify the gender disparities in access to education, training and labour markets, and develop and implement the necessary gender-sensitive policies in these areas.

3. Entrepreneurship

22. There are too few employers and hence too few job opportunities in the world. Cumbersome procedures and regulations hamper the start-up of new businesses. All countries need to review, rethink and reorient the legal and institutional framework for business to make it easier to start and run a business.

23. Governments and international organizations should make it a top priority to obtain real, reliable and relevant data on the informal economy and on the rules and procedures required to set up and operate a new business within a legal framework. On the basis of a better understanding of the institutional obstacles, policies should be developed to allow this part of the economic system to be integrated into the mainstream economy and raise its productivity through legal facilitation. This review should be combined with respect for labour standards, which should be seen as a basic element in achieving productivity and prosperity.

24. Governments, at the national and local levels, need to encourage a broad and dynamic concept of entrepreneurship to stimulate both personal initiative and initiatives in a broad variety of organizations which include, but reach beyond, the private sector: small and large enterprises, social entrepreneurs, cooperatives, the public sector, the trade union movement and youth organizations. Countries also need to strengthen policies and programmes so that small enterprises can flourish and create decent work within an enabling environment. Each country should set objectives and targets for a broad reform programme, based on best practice, which process can offer more flexibility for enterprises and more security for workers.

4. Employment creation

25. Employability, equal opportunities and entrepreneurship, to be most effective, require an enabling environment where employment creation is placed at the centre of macroeconomic and other public policies. Employability requires not just appropriate skills and training but also public policies which lead to new employment opportunities where these skills can be used. Investing in youth requires not just better skilled youth, but a commitment by public and private sector partners to keep job creation a central concern of their investment strategies. Equality should follow a high road leading to increased opportunities for both women and men. Entrepreneurship should be supported not only through structural measures but also through growth-oriented macro-economic policies so that enterprises can sustain themselves.

26. **We, members of the Secretary-General's Panel, recommend that the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization invite heads of State and Government to translate these four global priorities for a decent work strategy for young people into national action plans with targets for the creation of jobs and for the reduction of unemployment, and to take personal responsibility for presenting those plans to the United Nations by September 2002 on the basis of the political commitment made at the Millennium Assembly.**

D. The way forward: urgency, long-term commitment and partnership

27. Translating these global priorities into national action plans is only a start towards meeting the common goal of decent and productive employment for young people. An objective of these plans is to launch a policy dialogue and to mobilize partners for action. They will demonstrate the potential contribution which youth employment can make towards implementing national poverty reduction strategies, thereby helping to reach the international goal, agreed to at the Millennium Summit, of halving extreme poverty by the year 2015.

28. There are two time horizons for this exercise. First, work must start immediately — in all countries — to get the national action plans ready by September 2002. It is urgent and therefore requires leadership from the highest political level. Heads of State and Government should make this task a top priority of their Governments. As a catalyst to this process, the High-level Panel recommends that the heads of State and Government of 10 countries be encouraged to volunteer to take the lead in the review and renewal of employment policies for youth, and be supported in this process with policy guidance and technical support from ILO, the United Nations and the World Bank, so that their experiences can be shared with all other countries in developing their action plans.

29. Second, there is no quick fix: it requires long-term commitment. The review, rethinking and reorientation of national policies will have to be an ongoing process with political impetus over many years, through elections and changes in government. That is why broad coalitions and partnerships at the local, national and international levels are needed with employers, trade unions, local governments, youth organizations and other key players from civil society.

30. The United Nations, the World Bank and ILO will work to provide Governments and employers, trade unions, local governments, youth organizations and other key players in civil society with relevant and up-to-date indicators on youth employment, including data on the informal economy, on the costs occasioned by procedures for starting and operating enterprises and on the social and economic costs of youth unemployment. The purpose of this information is to help Governments to formulate objectives and targets and to develop new policies to promote youth employment. A list of specific recommendations, which could assist Governments and other actors in this regard is provided in section II below.

31. Furthermore, when heads of State and Government have presented their national action plans by September 2002, the United Nations, the World Bank and ILO should support Governments by making an analysis of the national action plans. This could be done on the basis of the ILO Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122). The result of this exercise will be presented in September 2003 and the conclusions will be used for the preparation of the next steps in a longer-term process.

32. **We, members of the Secretary-General's Panel, recommend that the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International**

Labour Organization provide guidance and organize technical support over the next years for the policy-making process, ILO having lead responsibility for this effort. We furthermore commit ourselves to supporting the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization as they assist Governments, social partners and youth organizations both to take immediate action and to build a long-term commitment to youth employment.

II. Decent work for young people: a guide to action

The following recommendations provide a guide to the range of actions that would, if vigorously and successfully implemented by the relevant stakeholders, improve the position of young people in the labour market. They also take into account the fact that young people are a diverse group with varying needs based on factors such as gender, ethnicity and geographical location.

Recommendation 1
A youth employment dimension integrated into comprehensive employment strategies

Incorporate youth employment policies into a comprehensive employment strategy and strengthen their linkages with macroeconomic, social and development policies by:

- Adopting an integrated and intersectoral approach to creating decent work for young people which links employment generation policies with principles related to social protection, empowerment, voice and representation, and rights at work;
- Incorporating such an integrated approach into a comprehensive employment policy framework that guarantees that the key policy issues affecting employment, such as investment, trade, technology, enterprise development, labour market policies and human resource development contribute directly and/or indirectly to employment growth;
- Making substantial employment generation and poverty reduction key goals of a national development strategy within a context of sustainable economic growth;
- Determining priorities and setting targets and goals in the implementation of national policies and programmes for promoting youth employment;
- Undertaking joint action with international financial institutions and development organizations to ensure that youth employment dimensions are included within the framework of national economic, social and poverty reduction strategies and technical cooperation efforts;
- Ensuring that essential human services such as basic education, secondary, technical and vocational education and training, basic health and other care and support services important to well-being and thus to building humane societies have a central place in budget priorities;
- Systematically monitoring and evaluating outcomes in relation to targets and goals, as a basis for facilitating continuous improvements;
- Fully integrating youth employment into the ongoing work of the International Labour Organization, mandated by the General Assembly to develop a "coherent and integrated international strategy on employment", and, in this regard, ensuring the participation of young people and representatives of the Youth Employment Network in the 2001 Global Employment Forum.

Recommendation 2
Strong institutional support for youth employment policies

Make social and economic institutions work for youth by:

- Ensuring that institutions which affect youth employment make optimum use of the potentials and capacities of young people;
- Providing mechanisms for dialogue and consultation with social partners, youth organizations and other civil society actors in the formulation of policies relevant to youth employment issues and concerns;
- Developing the capacity of youth organizations and other civil society partners to support their effective participation in policy dialogue;
- Increasing the impact of policies and programmes by ensuring coordination between government agencies;
- Reinforcing the capacity of public and private institutions, especially in developing countries, such as development agencies, local labour

market institutions and education and training providers to implement youth employment policies and programmes;

- Ensuring that national and local institutions are sensitive to the diversity of young people and their needs;
- Supporting the development of a knowledge base on youth employment, including statistical and other indicators that facilitate diagnosis, policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation;
- Contributing to mechanisms at the national level to ensure that youth employment initiatives reflect intergenerational solidarity and do not lead to the transfer of unemployment to other age groups;
- Contributing to mechanisms at the international level, such as the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network, that promote global solidarity and more effective coordination of the international dimensions of youth employment strategy;
- Fostering greater coherence between the policy positions of Governments, the private sector and civil society organizations, as well as multilateral development institutions, and their operational activities.

Recommendation 3
Investment in education, training and life-long learning

(a) Adopt national educational and training strategies which set achievable targets for raising participation levels among young people and which make a strong commitment to adequate and sustained investment in human resource development.

Recognizing the severity of the constraints on raising revenue in many countries, advocate an increase in domestic resource allocation and external grant assistance for education of at least an additional $8 billion a year as recommended in the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All, adopted at the World Education Forum, held at Dakar in April 2000. This effort requires recognition of the centrality of the goal of education for all, a strengthened national and international commitment to increasing revenue both domestically and internationally, and sustaining a focus on reaching the targets in the coming decades.

(b) Ensure that girls and boys are able to obtain quality education that lays the foundation for employability and that fosters the development of attitudes and values needed to succeed in life by:

- Expanding access for all children to basic education;
- Improving the quality of basic education, including participation and successful completion rates;
- Taking specific actions to promote girls' education in line with the United Nations 10-year Girls' Education Initiative, launched during the World Education Forum held at Dakar;
- Giving special attention to disadvantaged groups, such as young people in rural areas and those with disabilities;
- Adopting imaginative initiatives and creative programmes to encourage young people to remain at school, at least until basic literacy and numeracy have been achieved, and which will provide opportunities for early school-leavers, including adolescent mothers, to continue their education;
- Providing incentives and support to poor families to ensure that child workers are taken out of the workplace, rehabilitated and provided with the opportunity to attend school;
- Developing learning opportunities for young adults with little or no schooling to obtain basic numeracy and literacy together with life and livelihood skills;
- Providing "new start" or "repeat" education opportunities for those that fail or prematurely had to leave school.

(c) Improve the accessibility, relevance and effectiveness of secondary and higher education and technical and vocational training so that both young women and young men will be better equipped to take advantage of opportunities in the labour market and to cope with fast-paced changes in the world of work by:

- Providing access to vocational training as a fundamental right in the provision of decent work;
- Promoting closer links between technical skills curricula and labour market needs and combining them with soft and other support skills needed for labour market success, through increased cooperation among employers' organizations, trade unions, training and education institutions and industry;
- Developing or improving training systems that raise skill levels and facilitate a smooth transition from school to work, through a combination of off-the-job vocational education and programmes of learning and structured training in the workplace, either in apprenticeship-based arrangements or other vocational skill pathways;
- Promoting equal access to technical and vocational training and higher education by providing gender-sensitive vocational guidance and counselling and by encouraging girls and young women to enter into male-dominated fields of study that offer avenues to new and promising work opportunities;
- Promoting a learning culture and establishing a framework for lifelong learning that, through the creation of incentives and cost-sharing mechanisms, encourages continuous investment in education and training by enterprises and by young people;
- Developing and improving competency-based standards, national qualification frameworks and nationally accredited training systems, in partnership with employers' organizations, trade unions, education authorities and training providers, to ensure the quality of public and private sector training and the portability of skills;
- Setting challenging but achievable targets for higher participation levels in post-basic education.

Recommendation 4
A bridge between the informal and the mainstream economies

Take concerted action to help improve economic and human capabilities, productivity and incomes for young people working in the informal economy, to facilitate the integration of this part of the economic system into the mainstream economy, by:

- Quantifying the magnitude of the informal economy and generating relevant information on the value of informal enterprises, assets and work, as well as the characteristics of extralegal rules governing informal production and transactions and the institutional barriers that prevent most enterprises from becoming more productive and generating decent employment in the legal economy;
- Creating simplified and enabling legal and regulatory frameworks that remove bureaucratic obstacles to setting up and operating small and microenterprises;
- Modifying laws and regulations to assign property rights to the informal assets of the poor, thereby enabling young workers and entrepreneurs to deploy them in production and income generation;
- Promoting avenues for the graduation of enterprises from the informal to the formal economy;
- Helping young people, particularly women, to make the transition from informal to formal employment through improved access to training, business development services, business linkages such as mentoring and financial instruments including microfinance;
- Connecting young informal workers to expanding market opportunities through the supply/value chains used by Governments, international development institutions and private businesses to purchase, subcontract or outsource goods and services;
- Harnessing the creativity and potential of young people in the informal economy to develop new business ideas and service delivery mechanisms

to cater to changing national and international markets;

- Encouraging the development of self-help groups and membership-based organizations, including cooperatives, among young people, so that they can better organize for accessing supplies, information, credit and markets.

Recommendation 5
The potential of information and communication technologies

Adopt national strategies to harness the employment generation and welfare-enhancement potential of information and communication technologies (ICT) for the benefit of young women and men by:

- Providing young people with opportunities to develop ICT literacy through the education system and/or ICT training facilities, and also providing them with affordable access to computers and the Internet;
- Building the technical ICT skills of young people in collaboration with the ICT industry, educational institutions and other actors to design and accredit culturally relevant and youth-friendly courses;
- Exploiting opportunities for paid employment and self-employment, and entrepreneurial activities offered by the development of internationally and domestic-oriented ICT industries and the deployment of ICT across different industry groups, paying special attention to the needs of particular groups, including young people with disabilities;
- Making greater use of both new and traditional information and communication technologies as tools for development and for greater voice and empowerment for all groups of young people in collaboration with employers' organizations, trade unions, ICT service vendors, non-governmental organizations, youth organizations and other national and international partners;
- Taking action to bridge the ICT gender divide within as well as among countries by eradicating factors that restrict equal access to ICT; providing and supporting education and ICT training for both young women and young men; and encouraging young women to participate in the design of the content and modes of use of ICT. In countries where cultural norms and traditions isolate women, maximize the potential of the Internet to provide young women with new means of access to learning and information;
- Creating an enabling environment for ICT diffusion through infrastructure development and appropriate trade and fiscal policies and legislative frameworks, mobilizing domestic and foreign investment;
- Facilitating and fostering community initiatives and partnerships between public, private and multilateral institutions to ensure that actions at the local, national and international levels to bridge the digital divide are mutually reinforcing.

Recommendation 6
New sources of work in the service sector

Exploit the new opportunities for employment of young people being opened up by the rapidly expanding service sector, by:

- Recognizing that human services such as education, health and personal care for the young, the old, the sick and the disabled, which are essential for the development of equitable societies, are among the most labour-intensive forms of employment and offer new and increasing employment opportunities for young people;
- Using labour-intensive methods for infrastructure investments and environmental restoration works, and training young people as small-scale private contractors to execute such works;
- Expanding the access of young people to sectors such as environmental conservation, tourism, entertainment and mass media, and other service areas that might be particularly appealing to young people, by means of training and public/private partnerships;
- Introducing youth employment and work-based training as a new dimension of the contracting

procedures of municipal authorities and other government agencies, including government projects funded by international agencies;

- Working in collaboration with youth groups, community-based organizations, trade unions and employers to develop employment opportunities and work-based training as an alternative to social assistance and to provide skill enhancement and training for young people;
- Encouraging young people to develop ideas and implement projects in social entrepreneurship, combining business skills with socially responsible objectives.

Recommendation 7
Entrepreneurship and enterprise development

Promote innovation and entrepreneurship for young people, as well as employment opportunities through enterprise development, by:

- Creating awareness through the media and the education and training system of entrepreneurship and self-employment as viable and rewarding career options;
- Providing information on market opportunities, training in business skills, access to capital, mentoring by qualified persons and other business support services tailored to the needs of small firms and young entrepreneurs;
- Encouraging financial institutions to provide credit and other financial services at affordable prices to support youth entrepreneurship and enterprise development;
- Supporting youth entrepreneurship in areas such as design, technology and marketing where the openness to and awareness of young people to new trends could help to link traditional small firm activities in developing countries to international markets;
- Promoting the formation of inter-firm networks and self-help associations, among microfirms and young entrepreneurs, to enable them to exchange experience and undertake initiatives such as participating jointly in trade fairs and sharing infrastructure, ICT and incubation facilities; and encouraging the development of employers' organizations to provide support services and representation;
- Facilitating learning and the exchange of experience among practitioners supporting youth entrepreneurship and small enterprise development, as a means of improving the effectiveness of existing and new youth programmes;
- Promoting youth entrepreneurship in the social sector, for example, providing community services and/or addressing local environmental and health issues;
- Promoting mentoring arrangements between existing enterprises and young people by enlisting the support of families and service organizations;
- Recognizing the value of civil society organizations in increasing employment opportunities for young people.

Recommendation 8
Access of youth to employment services and support

Expand and improve the range of labour market services available to young people as a means of facilitating their better and faster access to work by:

- Supplying more up-to-date and relevant labour market and business-related information, for example on opportunities for specialized training, continuing education and job placement, as well as information about young workers' rights and the required skills and training for work;
- Providing more effective and gender-sensitive job search assistance and placement services for young people, through schools, employment services, internships or job clubs, as well as support for both young women and young men wishing to start their own business;
- Promoting the implementation of non-discriminatory labour laws regarding equal recruitment and retention of young women and men; this includes helping them to reconcile work and family responsibilities;

- Using "role models" to advocate positive attitudes towards work;
- Facilitating more opportunities for mentoring, internship and work experience opportunities for young people entering the labour market and on-the-job follow-up programmes for those already at work;
- Making increasing use of specialized youth employment "one-stop" and mobile facilities which offer a suite of readily accessible labour market services to young people;
- Expanding the use, where feasible, of information and communication technologies as a tool for disseminating career materials and labour market and business-related information, and for facilitating job-matching processes;
- Providing special services for "at risk" youth who are on the fringes of the labour force or are unemployed, such as special counselling services, job search advice and assistance, opportunities for work experience, training for employability and publicly financed job creation projects implemented by the private sector or local community.

Recommendation 9
A social floor for working youth

Ensure a social floor for young people by improving their working conditions, promoting their rights and recognizing their voice and representation at work by:

- Raising the awareness of young workers of their fundamental rights at work and educating and equipping them to claim those rights;
- Promoting the organization and representation of young workers and entrepreneurs by trade unions, employers' organizations or other organizations of their own choosing, in accordance with the ILO Conventions concerning freedom of association;
- Bringing young people into the national policy debate by ensuring that their roles are recognized and their voices heard and respected — "listen and learn from young people";
- Ensuring that young people are adequately and fairly represented and have speaking and voting rights on the boards of trade unions, employers' organizations and other civil society organizations;
- Supporting pilot programmes and self-help initiatives to improve the safety, health and working conditions of all workers, in particular those young workers in the informal economy who typically fall outside formal protection systems, as well as facilitating linkages between those initiatives and formal institutions;
- Elaborating a framework, in consultation with workers' and employers' organizations, to provide access to social protection and active labour market policies that assist in the transition of young people into other work after a job loss;
- Adopting measures in collaboration with government agencies, employers' organizations and trade unions to extend the coverage of social protection systems and legal and regulatory instruments to young workers in the informal economy and in flexible forms of work associated with the knowledge economy;
- Providing technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to enable them to develop social protection systems for vulnerable, unprotected and uninsured young workers;
- Paying particular attention to the improvement of working conditions, the provision of health services and social security, the right of representation, and protection from discrimination and sexual harassment of young women, especially those working in export processing zones;
- Giving support and protection to young women and men with HIV/AIDS through joint action by Governments, employers, trade unions and youth organizations in compliance with the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work, including the use of the workplace for information-sharing and counselling about the risks of HIV/AIDS.

Recommendation 10
Partnership for youth employment

Extend outreach and mobilize networks to promote youth employment locally, nationally and internationally, by:

- Encouraging youth organizations to take initiatives and actions at community and national levels;
- Providing support and services for network-building and the exchange of knowledge and experience about the youth employment programmes that work at the local level, and how they can be expanded to increase their impact;
- Encouraging public, private and civil society partners to pool their knowledge and resources to jointly launch innovative youth employment programmes that are sustainable;
- Undertaking joint research and evaluation on issues relating to youth employment, including better methodologies to evaluate the social and financial costs of youth unemployment and underemployment, and the benefits of youth employment policies and programmes;
- Learning from the experience of other countries, particularly those in the South, through innovative partnerships such as twinning development agencies, universities or cities;
- Calling on the international community to provide support, where needed, and to facilitate the coordinated exchange of ideas and experience, especially through the use of the Internet to compile and exchange information.

Recommendation 11
An enabling international environment

Recognizing that effective, sustained application of these policies by many countries should be supported by major improvements in the international economic and financial environment, these changes must include:

- Provision by all developed countries of duty-free, quota-free market access to all non-arms exports of the 49 least developed countries, and consideration of extending this provision to other developing countries;
- Redoubling of efforts to increase the amount of overseas development assistance and to meet the international commitment to provide 0.7 per cent of GNP for aid, as a necessary complement to attracting private funds and a condition for escaping the poverty trap;
- Continuing the process of debt cancellation by bilateral and multilateral creditors and, in that context, ensuring that youth employment is substantively addressed in poverty reduction strategies developed by highly indebted poor countries, and also that young people are fully consulted in the development of those strategies;
- Striving to create the conditions necessary to attract and increase the flow of long-term private investment;
- Reform of the international financial structure to reduce the risk of financial volatility;
- Exploration of new and innovative sources of external funding for development.

Recommendation 12
Future of the Youth Employment Network

Recognizing the need for concerted and coordinated international action on youth employment, we are conveying these recommendations to the Secretary-General for consideration and action by the international community. We, moreover, commit ourselves to working with the Secretary-General in the coming years for the implementation of these recommendations. Furthermore:

- We commit ourselves to raising awareness about and building support for the Network and, more generally, to promoting decent work for young people;
- We support the widening of the scope of the Network to make it truly global, reaching out to other partners at the regional and national levels, the International Labour Organization having the lead responsibility for this effort, including the organization of the secretariat and promoting

fund-raising from Governments, corporations and foundations;

- We recommend the linking of the Network to other international programmes, including major initiatives of the United Nations system and other multilateral initiatives;

- We recommend that the International Labour Organization launch an international action programme on youth employment in support of the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network;

- We advocate the launching, on a pilot basis, of concrete youth initiatives which are sustainable and which can be replicated, and we commit ourselves to supporting those initiatives;

- We recommend the establishment of an interactive web site for the Network for raising awareness, facilitating dialogue, providing policy tools, and sharing good practice in promoting productive and rewarding work for young people;

- We commit ourselves to meeting in one year's time under the auspices of the Secretary-General, to reviewing the progress made and lessons learned by the Network, and to continuing collaboration with the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization in translating these recommendations into action.

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Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 1 October 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia — representing its King, its Government and its people — has condemned the heinous terrorist acts committed on 11 September 2001 against the United States of America causing heavy loss of life and enormous destruction and serious damage to property. The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has issued a statement in which it condemns a criminal act that is incompatible with all religious values and all concepts of human civilization. In a letter addressed to the President of the United States, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques voices his strong disapproval, condemnation and censure of such acts, offers his sincere condolences to the families of the victims and to the American people and expresses the Kingdom's solidarity with the international community in confronting and combating terrorism in all its forms. In a telephone call to the President of the United States, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard conveyed his condolences to the President and to the American people for the victims of this grievous incident resulting from a terrorist act that is rejected and despised by the revealed religions. His Highness conveyed the full readiness of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to cooperate with the United States Government in all matters that might assist in the identification and pursuit of the perpetrators of this criminal episode.

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, condemnation of this terrorist act has not been restricted to official circles but has embraced all classes of Saudi society. The General Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and President of the Consistory of Senior Religious Scholars has stated that "The bombing episodes that have taken place in the United States of America and the related aircraft hijackings, terrorization of peaceful citizens and unrightful killing of people are nothing other than a species of iniquity, immorality or infamy that is not endorsed by the Shariah of Islam and is indeed forbidden by it and among the cardinal sins".

His Eminence the President of the High Council of Justice of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has also stated that what has happened in the United States, with a

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hideousness and extreme savagery greater than that of wild beasts, and the terrifying sights of the consequences of the crime that have been witnessed are such that the mind of a Muslim does not entertain them. He went on to say that when the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia condemns such savage acts it is because it is an Islamic State governed by the system of Islam. Its statutes are bound by the restriction that they may not violate Islam. It acts thus because of the nature of its religion and on the basis of the Islamic stance it adopts because it is the country of the Two Holy Mosques. It is not strange that it should condemn abominations, censure the culpability of criminals or denounce the harbouring of any perpetrator of a crime or his accomplice. His Eminence the Sheikh added: "When the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia considered the question of the hijacking of aircraft at some time in the past, before any aircraft was ever hijacked to Saudi Arabia, its religious scholars decided to outlaw such an act. They did not differentiate between the hijacking of aircraft with Muslim passengers and aircraft with non-Muslim passengers and were indeed of the view that iniquity was to be prohibited and that aggression against people and their unrightful terrorization were among the world's greatest abominations and represented corruption therein".

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 166.

(*Signed*) Fawzi Bin Abdul Majeed **Shobokshi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative